



ASSOCIATES IN ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification. Our main office number is: 520-745-6531.

DAY OF SURGERY

FIRST HOUR: Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be gently removed after one hour. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. Once bleeding is minimal or has stopped remove the gauze. Do not replace the gauze unless persistent severe bleeding occurs, then follow the FIRST HOUR Instructions.

PERSISTENT BLEEDING: Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in warm water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in moist gauze) for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

OOZING: Once the gauze has been removed a clot will form over the surgical site area to protect as the site seals and starts to heal. Slight pink tinged saliva is normal and does not require additional gauze packs. Intermittent bleeding or oozing for the first few days is normal. Protect your linens.

EXERCISE CARE: You may resume normal oral hygiene the evening of your surgical procedure. Do NOT rinse vigorously or probe the surgical area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently. Stay away from the surgical areas. PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE or engage in any strenuous activity for at least 48 hours, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket.

SWELLING: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 48 hours after surgery. After 48 hours you may use ice or heat. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed.

PAIN: Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. If necessary you will be given a prescription for pain medication after your surgery procedure. The most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off. If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort. Some patients find that pain medicine causes nausea, if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate pain relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with an analgesic such as aspirin or ibuprofen. If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, you must call for a refill during weekday business hours.

NAUSEA: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food and taking the pill with a large volume of

fluids. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications. Classic Coca Cola or Sprite may help with nausea. Call our office if you do not feel better.

DIET: Drink and eat any nourishing food or liquids that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot or cold foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurts, milk shakes, etc.)

It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your Doctor.

DRY SOCKET: Dry sockets typically appear 3-4 days after the surgical extraction as a dull throbbing pain. The pain can be moderate to severe in intensity not relieved by pain medication and often seems to radiate from the area of the extraction site to the ear. Dry sockets typically create a foul odor or bad taste. There is no way to predict who will develop a dry socket. Dry sockets need to be treated by our doctor. The doctor will place a medicated dressing into the dry socket to soothe the pain. The medicated dressing is usually removed and replaced every 24 hours until the dry socket symptoms subside, which could take a number of days.

SHARP EDGES: If you feel something hard or has sharp edges in the surgical area, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls that once supported the extracted tooth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. You may be able to remove the small slivers of bone on your own, similar to removing a splinter. If the sharp edges cause concerns or discomfort, please call our office.

MOUTH RINSES: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. You can start rinsing **gently**, the evening of surgery with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8-ounce glass of warm water. Rinse with the warm salt water at least 2-3 times daily after meals for 5-7 days. If you are prescribed a mouth rinse disregard use of the warm salt water rinses and use the mouth rinse as prescribed for 5-7 days.

BRUSHING: Begin your normal oral hygiene routine the evening of surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort, avoiding the surgical area.

STITCHES: Sutures (stitches) may be placed in the surgical site. Stitches are used to stabilize the gum tissue or aid in controlling bleeding. After your surgical procedure the stitches will dissolve on their own in 2-4 days, if they have not, the stitches will be removed at your follow-up appointment.

HOT APPLICATIONS: You may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling 48 hours after surgery unless otherwise instructed by using hot water bottle, hot moist towels, and heating pad for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

HEALING: Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, with steady improvement. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. If you have been given a plastic irrigating syringe, **DO NOT** use for the first five days after surgery. You may then use the irrigating syringe daily according to our instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

Telephone calls for narcotic (pain killer) prescription renewals are **ONLY** accepted during office hours.

Note: It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have a problem and/or any questions associated with your procedure(s), please call our office at (520) 745-6531. If you call after normal office hours, you will receive our answering service and our on-call doctor will be able to assist you.