

Post-Operative Instructions Following Dental Surgery

THINGS TO EXPECT:

Bleeding: Bleeding or "oozing" for the first 12 to 24 hours.

Swelling: This is normal following a surgical procedure in the mouth. It should reach its maximum in two-to-three days and should begin to diminish by the fifth post-operative day.

Discomfort: The most discomfort that you may experience may occur for a few hours after the sensation returns to your mouth. It may gradually increase again for 2-3 days, then begin to diminish over the next few days.

THINGS TO DO IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY:

Bleeding: Place gauze over extraction sites and maintain pressure by biting for at least one hour. Repeat as needed. Keep head elevated, and rest. Do not suck or spit excessively. Refrain from blowing into musical instruments. NOTE: Some "oozing" and discoloration of saliva is normal. If bleeding persists, replace the gauze with a clean folded gauze placed over the extraction site, and maintain the pressure until the bleeding stops. If you have tea bags available, replace gauze with tea bag as this sometimes helps bleeding stop.

Swelling: Place ice or cold compresses on the region of surgery for ten minutes every half-hour for the first eight to 12 hours. NOTE: Ice bags or cold compresses should be used only on the day of surgery.

Smoking: Avoid smoking during the healing period.

Discomfort: Take medications as directed for PAIN. Mild-to-moderate pain can be relieved by non-prescription Ibuprofen or Naproxen. Tylenol may be taken with either of these, but DO NOT take Tylenol with Norco or Percocet as these already have Tylenol in them. For more severe pain, take the prescription pain medication as directed. Remember that these medications can take up to 30 minutes to one hour to take effect. If you are using any of these medications for the first time, exercise caution with the initial doses (start with ½ a pill).

Diet: A nutritious liquid or soft diet will be necessary for the first weeks after surgery. Healing will occur in weekly increments; therefore, it is best to gradually (in weekly increments) return the diet and/or other mouth/oral activities back to normal.

Physical Activity: For the first 24 to 48 hours, one should REST. Patients who have sedation should refrain from driving an automobile or from engaging in any task that requires alertness for the next 24 hours.

THE DAYS AFTER SURGERY:

1. Brush teeth carefully.
2. Beginning 24 hours after the surgery, rinse mouth with WARM SALT WATER (or prescription mouth rinse). Continue rinsing three-to-five times per day for seven days, then begin irrigating per dentist's instructions (see #7 below).
3. If ANTIBIOTICS are prescribed, be SURE to take ALL that have been prescribed, AS DIRECTED
4. For swelling, ice is helpful only in the first 24 hours, it prevents more swelling. After 24 hours, warm moist heat is helpful to get rid of swelling.
5. If SUTURES were used, they will dissolve on their own.
6. DRY SOCKET is a delayed healing response, which may occur during the second to fourth post-operative day. It is associated with a throbbing pain on the side of the face, which may seem to be directed up toward the ear. In mild cases, simply increasing the pain medication can control the symptoms. If this is unsuccessful, please call Dr. Arnold.
7. RETURN TO YOUR DENTIST'S OFFICE, if directed, five-to-seven days after the surgery to rinse sockets.

CONTACT THE DOCTOR IF:

1. Bleeding is excessive and cannot be controlled.
2. Discomfort is poorly controlled.
3. Swelling is excessive, spreading, or continuing to enlarge after 60 hours.
4. Allergic reactions to medications occur, which are causing a generalized rash or excessive itching.

CONTACT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ("EMS") OR CALL "911" IF: Patient loses or has lost consciousness

****Some drugs you may have been prescribed can have a high abuse potential (Hydrocodone: Norco, Lortab, Vicodin; Oxycodone: Percocet). Even one pill--one exposure--to narcotic pain meds such as these can start an addiction in some people...USE CAUTIOUSLY AND ONLY IF NEEDED...DO NOT SHARE WITH OTHERS...PARENTS KEEP THESE MEDS LOCKED UP AT ALL TIMES!***