

Post- Operative Instructions After Tooth Removal

Please note: These instructions are for the benefit of the dental patients treated by our office. Patients being treated by other dentists may receive the same instructions or instructions that have been modified based upon the individual care they have received. **Should you be experiencing either unusual pain or swelling or both, please call your dentist immediately!**

1. Bleeding is to be expected following extractions and other surgical procedures. The gauze that has been placed in your mouth before you left the office should remain in position for at least 45 minutes. At the end of the 45 minutes, please take two or three pieces of gauze, fold in half and if needed fold again and replace the gauze that is in your mouth and continue biting very firm on the gauze for another 45 minutes - total time biting on gauze is approximately 1 ½ hours. Should the bleeding continue after this, repeat the process, placing gauze for another 45 minutes. Should there continue to be excessive bleeding do as follows: Wipe off excessively large blood clots with gauze. Place folded gauze over the bleeding area. Bite firmly on pad and maintain gentle pressure for 45 minutes. Some oozing of blood over the next few days is normal. Contact the office or go to the emergency room at the hospital if excessive bleeding persists.
2. Pain. Some discomfort is normal following surgery. The site of the extraction as well as the jaw joints may be stiff and sore for as little as a few days or for as long as a couple of weeks. Please take two aspirin or Tylenol™ or Advil™ or other over-the-counter analgesic as soon as you arrive at home. Continue to take the analgesic every three to four hours at least for the first 24 to 48 hours to minimize any discomfort. If you have been given a prescription for pain medication, please take as directed (Do not drive, work with machinery, or drink alcoholic beverages for at least 6 hours after taking any prescribed pain medication). Some pain medications may make you nauseous and should be discontinued if this takes place. If you have a reaction to the medication, stop the medication and call the office immediately.
3. Antibiotics. If antibiotics are prescribed to reduce infection and swelling, take as directed. Be sure to take all the tablets prescribed. If any reactions occur, such as a rash or itching, discontinue all medication immediately and call the office. Antibiotics may take a day or two to be effective so continue to use pain medication as required.
4. Rinsing. On the first day following surgery, do not rinse your mouth, do not spit and do not use mouthwash, as any of these will lead to a possible loss of the blood clot that protects the healing extraction site and will then lead to pain. After the first day of surgery, gently rinse with warm salt water (one teaspoon in glass of warm water) for 20-30 seconds before spitting it out, ten (10) times per day over the next 5-7 days. Do not rinse too vigorously until healing has taken place.
5. Swelling. Following surgery some swelling is expected. It will reach its peak on the second day following surgery and it will begin to resolve on the fourth day. To minimize swelling, apply a covered (with towel) ice bag to your face for 10-minute intervals, removing the bag for 20 minutes in between intervals to avoid frost-bite. Continue ice packs for 4-6 hours after surgery.
6. Temperature. Following surgery it is quite common to have a slight elevation in temperature. Rest, take 2 aspirin or Tylenol™ or other over-the-counter analgesic every 4-6 hours, and drink plenty of fluids will return temperature to normal. If you are taking prescribed pain medication, they

will also aid in controlling fever and additional aspirin or Tylenol™ or other over-the-counter analgesic will not have to be taken.

7. Eating. A well balanced diet is important for proper healing. A soft, bland diet is suggested for the first few days. Drink plenty of fluids as soon as possible (do not use a straw), especially if you have been given antibiotics. Avoid hot foods, hot liquid and avoid smoking for at least 48 to 60 hours after surgery. (Smoking will delay the healing process and is a major cause of “dry socket”.) Do not chew on a numb or “frozen” lip as injury can result.

8. Impacted or Surgically removed teeth. The following conditions may occur, all of which are considered normal: Swelling and bruising can be expected. Minimize by using ice packs. Moderate to severe pain can be expected. Do not wait until the pain is severe to take medication. Have the prescription filled and take the first dose at once. Trismus (tightness) of the muscles may cause difficulty in opening the mouth. Should this happen, apply moist heat to the area. A sore throat may also develop. The corners of your mouth may dry and crack. Keep moist with ointment or petroleum jelly.

10. Sutures. Self-dissolving sutures are used most often. Over the next few days they will slowly dissolve and/or begin to loosen and eventually disappear. If permanent sutures are used you should return to the office in one to two weeks to have them removed.

Dry Socket

A dry socket can occur after a tooth has been extracted where the blood clot fails to form or disintegrates without undergoing organization. It can be accompanied by neuralgic pain with or without suppuration (infection / pus). A dry socket can be due to the body's inability to form a stable blood clot but usually occurs as a result of too much rinsing or "spitting" and thus the blood clot is dislodged or never really forms. The blood clot acts as a bandage over the recent extraction site. Symptoms can include a constant throbbing over several days – the pain can be quite severe and "doesn't seem to go away". If you think that you have a dry socket your dentist should be contacted. Pain medication and sometimes antibiotics will be prescribed to minimize the discomfort. A day or two may be required before some relief is felt and may take several weeks to heal. Normal healing is indicated by a decrease in need for pain medication over a period of time.

Removal of Teeth

After the tooth has been pulled there may be tenderness in the area where the tooth was. This is normal, having a tooth pulled is a form of surgery, and any area would be tender after such a procedure. Please speak with your dentist, he or she can answer any questions you may have and help make you more comfortable.

If you have any concerns or problems contact our office at 403-234-7400 so the problem can be addressed. If the office is closed go to the emergency room at the hospital. Contact our office as soon as possible.