

# POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXTRACTION OF TEETH

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\*\*\*PLEASE READ ALL OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY\*\*\*

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, if you have a question, follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification. Our number is (760)744-1919.

## DAY OF SURGERY

**FIRST THREE TO FOUR HOURS:** 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 unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be gently removed after three to four hours. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 2 hours. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 2 to 4 hours). It may be best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning.

**EXERCISE CARE:** Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do **NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently. **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours (no smoking for one week is highly recommended), since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket.

**OOZING:** Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze for 1-2 hours at a time.

**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 hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

**SWELLING:** Swelling can be associated with oral surgery. If present it can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen vegetables (such as peas) wrapped in a thin towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This may be applied ten minutes on and ten minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery.

**PAIN:** Most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. Fortunately, over the counter pain medication such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen is almost always sufficient. The most discomfort is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen. If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office.

**NARCOTIC PAIN MEDICATION:** It is very rare that a narcotic pain medication will be prescribed. If you were prescribed this take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off and you should be able to manage any discomfort better. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with an analgesic such as ibuprofen. If you precede each pain pill with a small amount of soft food and take the pill with a large volume of water it will reduce the chance that nausea will occur. Soda crackers and ginger ale may help with nausea should it occur. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better..

**DIET:** Eat any nourishing food that can be eaten with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. Do not use a straw for the first seven 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, yogurt, 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.

### **DAY AFTER SURGERY**

**MOUTH RINSES:** Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily for one week.

**BRUSHING:** Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

**HOT APPLICATIONS:** Most extractions will not require heat application. However, if any swelling has occurred you may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, warm moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

### **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

**SUTURES:** If sutures were placed they will fall out on their own after approximately three to five days.

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

**SHARP EDGES:** If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally, small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.

*It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact Dr. Wassel after hours. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.*