

# **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXTRACTION OF WISDOM 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**

**IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY:** 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 remove them until the local anesthesia first starts to wear off (tingling sensation of lower lip and chin). The packs may be gently removed at this time to take food and pain medication. Typically no additional gauze is required. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 4 hours. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 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. Please do not smoke or vap (no smoking or vaping for one week is highly recommended), since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket and/or infection.

**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 farther back towards the extraction sites. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in moist gauze) for 60 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

**SWELLING:** Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen vegetables (such as peas) wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied ten minutes on and ten minutes off during the first 48 hours after surgery. It is not uncommon for the maximum swelling to occur 48 hours after the procedure which should start to improve on the third or fourth day.

### **PAIN:**

**If you received a prescription for narcotic pain medication:** As soon as you notice the local anesthetic wearing off (tingling sensation in the lower lip and chin area) eat a small amount of food and take one pill with 400mg of ibuprofen (if not allergic). If you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, it will reduce the chance that nausea will occur. Typically patients require only one pain medication in total (occasionally two). The most severe pain is usually within four hours after the local anesthetic wears off, after that your need for medication should lessen. Four hours after the initial pain medication you may take acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen as needed.

**If you did not received a prescription for narcotic pain medication:** As soon as you notice the local anesthetic wearing off (tingling sensation in the lower lip and chin area) eat a small amount of food and take 800mg of ibuprofen (if not allergic). The most severe pain is usually within four hours after the local anesthetic wears off, after that your need for medicine

should lessen. Four hours after the initial pain medication you may take acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen as needed.

**NAUSEA:** Nausea may occur after surgery. Narcotic pain medication is most often the cause. Always precede narcotic pain medication with a small amount of soft food and a large volume of water. Soda crackers and ginger ale may help with nausea.

**DIET:** Confine the first day's intake to cool liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) without seeds, nuts or other particles that may get lodged in the socket areas. Do not use a straw and avoid hot foods.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR DAY AFTER SURGERY TO ONE WEEK**

**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. Rinse after each meal.

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

**DIET:** Eat any nourishing food that can be eaten with comfort. Do not use a straw for the first week after surgery. 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!

**HOT APPLICATIONS (MAY START AFTER 3 DAYS):** You may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot 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.

**IF YOU RECEIVED AN IRRIGATING SYRINGE:** DO NOT use the plastic irrigation syringe for the first full five days. Then use it twice daily (morning and evening) on the bottom extraction sites until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket (this may take up to two months). Failure to stop irrigating sites early may lead to infection.

**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. Maximum swelling will occur on or about 48 hours after surgery. 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, steady improvement.** If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. Sutures will fall out on their own after approximately 3-7 days.

**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.*