

INSTRUCTIONS FOR POSTOPERATIVE CARE AFTER ORAL SURGERY

~DENTAL EXTRACTIONS~

After dental extractions, there is an open wound in your mouth that needs specific care to minimize complications and promote rapid healing. Complying with the following recommendations will minimize pain, swelling and infection that are potential outcomes of any dental extraction.

DO NOT SMOKE OR USE A STRAW FOR AT LEAST 48 HOURS AFTER SURGERY OR DRY SOCKET MAY RESULT. Dry socket is a painful condition where the exposed bone of the socket becomes very painful and needs treatment in the office, sometimes requiring multiple visits. Consider quitting.

BLEEDING: Place 1-2 folded pieces of gauze over the extraction socket and bite down firmly. Leave in place for at least 30-40 minutes before changing. Replace the gauze until bleeding is minimal or has stopped completely. Do not chew on the gauze, as this can dislodge the blood clot. If the bleeding does not stop within 6 hours, bite on ice water soaked caffeinated tea bag or gauze for 30-40 minutes. If this does not decrease the bleeding, call our office for advice. Slight bleeding may continue for up to 12 hours, and you may have blood tinged saliva for 2-3 days after the extraction. If you had dentures inserted, try to leave them in for the first 24 hours. If bleeding persists for more than 6 hours, remove the denture(s) and bite on gauze directly over the bleeding site as above. Leave the denture out until you see us or your general dentist.

SWELLING: Ice will help minimize swelling in the first 48 hours after the extraction(s). Place an ice pack over the face near the areas of extraction for at least 10-minute periods. It is also helpful to sleep with the head elevated for the first 24 hours after the extraction(s). Peak swelling may be noted at 36 hours. Occasionally bruising of the neck or chest occurs and should not cause alarm. Start warm compress 48 hours following surgery.

DIET: For the first 3-4 days, eat only liquid, soft, and nonparticulate foods (mash potatoes, scrambled eggs, apple sauce) to avoid food impaction into the socket. This can disrupt the blood clot, which is essential to normal healing and avoiding the development of dry socket.

KEEP THE MOUTH CLEAN: Avoid rinsing the mouth for the first 12 hours after surgery. After 12 hours, use a warm salt-water solution (1 tsp of salt in a cup of water) rinse 4-5 times daily, especially after meals, for at least 5 days. You may brush teeth in the area after 24 hours, but avoid trauma to the extraction site or any areas where stitches were placed. You can use a Q-tip to clean these areas if they accumulate plaque. Avoid the use of a Water Pick for the first 2 weeks of healing.

NAUSEA: Nausea and sometimes vomiting happens occasionally after I.V. sedation or with some of the narcotic pain medications. If this should occur, try to settle the stomach with 7-Up or other bubbly liquid. The narcotic pain medication amount can be reduced by taking ibuprofen (Advil) along with half the dose. If nausea persists, take 2 tsp of Pepto-Bismol or Emetrol (over-the-counter) prior to taking the pain pills. If the nausea doesn't pass in 4 hours, or you are unable to keep your pain medication down, call the office and a prescription medication may be called in.

MEDICATIONS: Take pain medications and antibiotics as directed (if prescribed). Note: If you are taking birth control medication, please be aware that antibiotics may render them ineffective and an alternative contraceptive should be used for the remainder of your cycle. If you are able, take 400-600 mg of ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) every 6 hours starting immediately after surgery and for up to 1 week following surgery.

AFTER I.V. SEDATION: In the case of a severe atypical reaction or other emergency such as persistent loss of consciousness, disorientation, seizure, weakness, chest pain, rapid heart rate, or shortness of breath, please call 911 immediately.

REFRAIN FROM STRENUOUS ACTIVITY FOR AT LEAST 72 HOURS FOLLOWING SURGERY.

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