

Post-Surgical Instructions for Extraction of Third Molars (WISDOM TEETH)

Immediately following surgery:

- Bite firmly on the gauze pads covering each extraction site to help stop the bleeding. We will change the gauze pad before you leave the office. Leave the gauze pads in place for 30 minutes, and then remove them. If bleeding persists, put gauze pad over the extraction sites and continue to bite down firmly for an additional 30 minutes. Remember to remove the gauze before eating, drinking or sleeping.
- You may have difficulty feeling your lips, cheeks and tongue due to numbness from local anesthesia. This is a temporary feeling and will wear off within 2 to 6 hours. Please refrain from eating hot food or beverages until the numbness wears off.
- Apply ice packs to your face (On 20 minutes and Off 20 minutes for the first 72 hours).
- Take pain medicine as prescribed. Try to take the first dose of pain medicine before the numbness wears off. This will make it an easier transition for pain control after the numbness wears off.
- Do not rinse or spit the day of surgery as this may prolong bleeding.
- Rest and have someone with you for the rest of the day if you have been sedated.

Bleeding

Some bleeding is to be expected following surgery and it *is not uncommon* to have oozing or blood-tinged saliva for the first 24 hours following surgery. Keep in mind oral bleeding represents a little blood and a lot of saliva. Excessive bleeding is defined as: pooling or dripping of blood out of the extraction site within 15-20 seconds of removing the gauze. Bleeding should never be severe. If so, *it usually means that the gauze packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical sites. Try repositioning the packs.* If bleeding persists or begins again, sit upright or in a recliner, avoid physical activity, use ice packs, and bite on gauze for 1 hour or on a moistened tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the tea leaves helps to promote blood clotting. If bleeding continues, call our office for further instructions.

Swelling

Swelling is a normal occurrence after any surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days after surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag, or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for the first 72 hours following surgery. Elevate the head of your bed on a couple of pillows or sleep on a recliner at night. After 72 hours, ice no longer will help and warm moist heat can be used for relief of swelling, bruising, or stiffness of the jaw. Heat should be applied 3-4 times daily.

Discoloration or Bruising

The development of black, blue, green or yellow discoloration is due to bruising beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence that might appear 2-3 days after surgery. Beginning 72 hours after surgery, warm moist heat may be applied to the area to speed up resolution of the discoloration.

Oral Hygiene

It is important to keep the mouth clean. You should brush your teeth the night of surgery but be gentle around the surgical sites. Saltwater rinses may begin 24 hours following surgery. (Mix 1 tablespoon of salt with 8 ounces of water). Swish gently and allow the water to drip in the sink. Rinses should be done 3-5 times daily, especially after eating. Continue to brush all of your other teeth. Continue rinsing with warm salt water until you are able to brush over the extraction sites without tenderness.

Pain and Medications

Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually receive a prescription for pain medication. If you take the first pill before the local anesthesia wears off, then you will be able to manage it better. Please take the pain medication as prescribed. Some patients find that stronger pain medicine cause nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medication vary widely among individuals. If you find that your pain medicine is not controlling your pain, please call our office. If you were given a prescription for an antibiotic, follow the instructions accordingly. Make sure to finish your course of antibiotics unless given other instructions from your surgeon.

Diet

Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. Do not use a straw for one week following surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first days intake to liquids or pureed food (soups, puddings, yogurt, milkshakes without the straw, etc). It is best to avoid foods like rice, nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc that may get lodged in the socket area. Avoid foods with sharp edges such as chips that may disturb the extraction site, for 3 days following surgery. Drink plenty of fluids to rehydrate. You may progress your diet to more solid foods as you tolerate. Do not skip meals. If you nourish regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal better. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

Dry Lips/ Stiff Muscles

If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Keep your lips moist with an ointment such as Vaseline, or use a lip balm frequently. Stiff muscles may cause limitation in opening of the mouth wide for a few days after surgery. This is a normal post-operative event that usually resolves during the week after surgery. Stretching these muscles, along with warm moist heat may help speed up the resolution of this problem.

Sutures or “Stitches”

If sutures are present, they will dissolve on their own and may come out any time after surgery (usually 7-10 days). You may notice that they are loose after the swelling of your gum tissue decreases. This is normal.

Irrigating

If you have been supplied with an irrigator (small plastic syringe), you will begin using it on the 5th day following surgery on the lower extraction sites after each meal and before bedtime. Fill the syringe with lukewarm water. Make sure to get the tip of the syringe into the extraction site and flush out the extraction site completely. This may be uncomfortable at first and you may notice a small amount of blood, but keeping the site clean reduces your chance of infection.

Activity

If you have undergone intravenous sedation, you should go home immediately after surgery and rest for the remainder of the day. Do not drive, work, attend school or engage in strenuous activity for at least 24 hours. If you were given a prescription for a narcotic pain medication, avoid driving, working, attending school or engaging in strenuous activity while taking the medication. Bending, lifting or strenuous activity will result in increased bleeding, swelling and pain. If you exercise regularly, be aware that normal fluid caloric intake is reduced. Exercising in the post-operative period may also result in increased bleeding, swelling, and discomfort. Exercise should be avoided for 3-4 days following surgery.

Dry Socket

After tooth extraction, it is important for a blood clot to form in the socket to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. A dry socket occurs when the blood clot is dislodged from the surgical site exposing the bone and fine nerve endings. It is more common in the back teeth although it can occur at any extraction site. Dry socket occurs 3 or more days after the extraction and can last 5-6 days. You can avoid a dry socket by following these instructions:

- Do not smoke for 5 days following surgery
- Clean the extraction site (s) as instructed and follow all at-home instructions
- Avoid the sucking action from smoking, spitting or using straws for the first week following surgery
- Do not rinse mouth excessively; it interferes with blood clotting
- Avoid playing a musical instrument that requires blowing for the first week following surgery

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, or if you are experiencing unusual symptoms, please call our office at 701-255-4000 or 1-800-452-FACE. You will also be able to reach us at the numbers above after hours and on weekends.

SOFT FOOD DIET

Apple sauce
Baked or mashed Potatoes / hashbrowns
Canned Fruit
Cottage Cheese
Ground meats like chicken
Hot cereals
Jello
Juices
Malts / Ice Cream
Milkshakes with Peanut Butter for protein
Pancakes
Peas
Popsicles
Pudding
Rice
Scrambled Eggs
Soups
Spaghetti / ravioli / pasta
Supplements (Ensure, Boost, Resource)
Tuna / Tuna Hot-dish
Yogurt