

Homecare Instructions Following Oral Surgery

Please continue to take all medications as prescribed for the amount of time indicated. Failure to take medications could result in discomfort and/or infection of the surgical site.

ANTIBIOTIC- Please continue taking the prescribed antibiotic for a minimum of ten days after your Surgery.

ANALGESIC- Take Motrin (Ibuprophen) or advised pain reliever following your surgery for 2 to 3 days afterwards. Motrin is an anti-inflammatory, and will help with swelling as well as discomfort. If you have pain that is more intense, you may take the Norco (Vicodin) in addition to the Motrin. Do not discontinue taking the Motrin until you are comfortable.

ANTI-MICROBIAL RINSE- Please use tippets provided (pink sponge on stick) dipped in rinse (Peridex/Chlorhexedine) or over the counter Listerine to clean your surgical site after every time you eat (3 to 7 times a day).

Do not rinse with Peridex unless advised by a doctor, as it may stain your remaining teeth.

Bite firmly but gently on the gauze pad placed by the dentist to reduce bleeding and allow a clot to form in the tooth socket. Change gauze pads before they become soaked with blood. Otherwise, leave the pad in place for three to four hours after the extraction.

Keep your head elevated for 24 hours. When lying down, prop your head with pillows. Lying flat may prolong bleeding. Please avoid any vigorous exercise for at least 48 hours. No heavy lifting or extensive bending. It is normal to experience mild bleeding for a few days after surgery.

If heavy bleeding persists the use of a cold teabag is an effective method to decrease/stop the bleeding. Dip the teabag in ice water, squeeze out, and bite firmly for 30 minutes.

No smoking for preferably one week prior to, and at least 48 hours after surgery. Ideally it would be preferred for smoking to be ceased the entire duration the sutures are in. Smoking decreases circulation delaying the healing and may cause complications after surgery.

In addition to not smoking, avoid the use of straws for at least 48 hours following surgery. Avoid rinsing or spitting forcefully for 24 hours after the extraction to avoid dislodging the clot that forms in the socket. No alcohol for 48 hours after surgery. These could all disrupt the surgical site, and delay the healing time.

Swelling around the mouth, eyes and cheeks is normal following any surgery, and usually takes 2-3 days to fully develop. Applying ice to your face and keeping your head elevated for the first 24 hours will help reduce swelling. The use of ice water intraorally by taking small sips holding it until it warms and swallowing can also be done. Ice serves no useful purpose after 24 hours and may contribute to stiffness in the jaw. Beginning seventy-two hours after surgery, a heating pad or moist heat may be used for relief of swelling, bruising and stiffness of the jaw. Heat should be continued for thirty minute intervals, three or four times daily, until the symptoms subside.

Continuing oral hygiene is important, continue to brush and floss your teeth, and brush your tongue, but be sure to avoid the extraction site. Doing so will help prevent infection. After 24 hours be sure to clean the site using the sponges provided dipped in Peridex/Listerine after every meal and snack, making sure to remove any bits of food. Failure to remove food particles from the surgical site can result in delayed healing and severe discomfort. Do not pull on, or put tension on the surgical site. Gently roll your lip out of the way while cleaning.

You may notice that the sutures are loose after the swelling of your gum tissue decreases. This is completely normal.

Eat soft foods, such as soup, pudding, yogurt, or applesauce the days after surgery. Gradually introduce solid foods into your diet as the surgical site heals.

Only a very small percentage – about 2% to 5% of people – develop dry socket after a tooth extraction. The socket is the hole in the bone where the tooth has been removed. After a tooth is pulled, a blood clot forms in the socket to protect the bone and nerves underneath. Sometimes that clot can become dislodged or dissolve a couple of days after the extraction. That leaves the bone and nerve exposed to air, food, fluid, and anything else that enters the mouth. This can lead to infection and severe pain that can last for five or six days. If you look into the site where the tooth was pulled, you'll probably see a dry-looking opening. Instead of a blood clot, there will just be bone. The pain typically starts about two days after the tooth was pulled. Over time it becomes more severe and can radiate to your ear. Other symptoms of dry socket include bad breath and an unpleasant smell and taste in your mouth.