

POST-OPERATIVE SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

We are committed to providing the same quality of care following procedures that began during your initial visit. To that end, please refer to the general post-operative guidelines below.

THE DAY OF SURGERY

1. **DO NOT DISTURB THE AREA OF SURGERY.** Avoid vigorous chewing, excessive spitting, or rinsing, as initial healing may be delayed, active bleeding restarted, or infection introduced. However, after the first 12-24 hours, you can resume brushing your teeth with a soft toothbrush. Hygiene is very important.

2. **EXPECT MINOR BLEEDING OR OOZING** from the operative site. This bleeding may continue throughout the first day. For the first couple of hours, keep firm pressure on the area of surgery by biting on the gauze pad. You will need to change the gauze pads every 20-30 minutes until the bleeding slows down. Once the bleeding has slowed, you can take the gauze pads out. Do not be alarmed if the bleeding takes longer than a couple of hours – everyone is different when it comes to clotting and it may take you a little longer. As long as you notice on the gauze pads that the bleeding is slowing down, then continue with firm pressure.

If the bleeding persists, biting on a moist tea bag may help. Tea has an ingredient that promotes blood clotting. If you are unsure of the bleeding, please don't hesitate to call our office to speak with a surgical assistant. If active bleeding should recur at any time, carefully rinse your mouth with cold water and apply a fresh gauze pad to the bleeding site. Firm pressure for 15-30 minutes usually controls the problem. Should active bleeding persist, please call the office.

3. **LIMIT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Over-exertion may lead to post-operative bleeding and discomfort. When you lie down, keep your head elevated on a pillow or a recliner.

4. **PAIN FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY** is unfortunately expected and typically will progress for 3 days after the operation. If you have to take the prescribed severe pain medication, remember to have some food intake prior to that and to start slowly. Please do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking prescription pain medication. Do not wait for the pain to become unbearable before using some form of pain medication, as then it will be more difficult to control.

Moderate to severe pain usually does not last longer than 5-7 days, with pain usually peaking by day 3 after surgery. Persistent or increasing pain 4-5 days following oral surgery may be caused by early loss of the blood clot (dry socket) or infection. If you feel that this may be happening to you, please contact us so that we can help make you more comfortable.

5. **SWELLING RELATED TO THE SURGICAL PROCEDURE** usually develops during the first 12-24 hours following surgery, often increasing on the second day and being at its worst on the third day. Swelling can be minimized a great deal by wearing an ice pack on the side of your face for 30-45 minutes every hour while you are awake during the first 48 hours following surgery, unless you receive special instructions.

6. **FLUID INTAKE IS IMPORTANT.** We suggest you start with clear carbonated beverages, such as ginger ale, 7-Up or Sprite. Once your stomach has settled, you can advance to other fluids such as water, tea, soda, broth, soup, or juice. Avoid hot liquids until the numbness has worn off and the bleeding has stopped.

7. **AVOID USING A STRAW FOR SEVERAL DAYS** as it may cause the blood clot to dislodge and delay the healing process.

8. **FOOD SELECTION** is largely a matter of your choice. Soft, cool foods that require little or no chewing are most easily tolerated at this time. A nutritious diet throughout your healing process is most important to your comfort and temperament. Hungry people become irritable and less able to deal with discomfort which can follow surgery. Since you will be taking medication, it is important to remember that eating can prevent nausea sometimes associated with certain medications. Once your stomach is settled, soups, broiled fish, stewed chicken, mashed potatoes, and pasta can be added to your diet as your comfort indicates. Ensure, Carnation Instant Breakfast and/or yogurt supply excellent added nutrition.

9. **TAKE ANY SPECIAL MEDICATION, SUCH AS ANTIBIOTICS**, we have prescribed on the specified dosage schedule. Yogurt with active cultures or acidophilus should be taken while on antibiotics to prevent diarrhea. It is important to take the antibiotics to completion. If you are given antibiotics and take birth control pills, you should be aware that the birth control pill may become ineffective, therefore take appropriate precautions.
10. **TAKE ANY REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEDICATION** (high blood pressure, etc.) on your regular schedule, unless advised to do otherwise.
11. **TRY TO AVOID SMOKING COMPLETELY**, as it tends to slow the healing process and may also contribute to development of a dry socket.
12. **DO NOT DRIVE AN AUTOMOBILE** for 24 hours following surgery if you have had intravenous sedation, or if you are taking prescription pain medication.

THE DAY FOLLOWING SURGERY AND THEREAFTER

1. On the morning of the day following surgery, rinse your mouth carefully with a solution made by adding ½ teaspoon of salt to a large glass of warm water. Repeat three times a day until remaining soreness subsides. Resume brushing any remaining teeth and your regular oral hygiene routine as soon as possible. You may resume gentle brushing of the extraction site with a soft-bristle brush 24-48 hours after surgery. Please do not use a syringe or Water-Pik **too aggressively** during the first week. This can dislodge the blood clot.
2. **STITCHES**. Stitches (also known as sutures) are usually placed to control bleeding, aid healing and help prevent food from collecting in the surgical site – especially for lower teeth. The sutures dissolve within 3 to 14 days and **DO NOT HAVE TO BE REMOVED**. Occasionally you will have sutures that need removal and a post-operative visit will be appointed for you.
3. **SWELLING, SORENESS, OR STIFFNESS IN THE JAW MUSCLES** is normal during the first few days after surgery. If swelling or pain should increase after 4-5 days, call the office.
4. Sometimes a soft diet may be necessary for the first days following surgery. Most patients are able to resume regular food intake within a short time.
5. Bruise marks may appear on the skin of the face during the first few days after surgery.

Faithful compliance with these instructions will add to your comfort and hasten your recovery. Be sure to follow these instructions carefully. Only in this way will you avoid the complications which lead to unnecessary discomfort and delayed recovery. Should any undue reaction or complication arise, notify our office immediately.

If you need to contact us during business hours (Mon-Thur 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Fri 8:00 am to 2:30 pm), please call 317-272-2200, or toll free at 800-396-1150. After hours, our doctor and staff members are on call every day of the year.

If you have a medical emergency that cannot wait until the next business day, please call 317-441-2003. Be sure to have the name of your doctor and your pharmacy number ready in case we need it.