

Post-Operative Instructions for Extractions

We hope your experience at Happy Smiles Family Dentistry has been a pleasant one! Please read these instructions carefully to help with the healing process and ensure the procedure's success.

Bleeding. Before you leave the office, you will be given verbal instructions regarding the control of post-operative bleeding. A rolled-up gauze pad will be placed on the extraction site, and you will be asked to change this dressing every 20 minutes or so depending on the amount of bleeding that is occurring. It is normal for some blood to ooze from the area of surgery for 8 to 12 hours. We will also give you a package of gauze to use at home if the bleeding should continue.

Should you need to use the gauze at home, remember to roll it into a ball large enough to cover the wound. Hold firmly in place, by biting or with finger pressure, for about 30 to 60 minutes. This pressure helps reduce bleeding and permits a clot to form in the tooth socket. If bleeding still continues, moisten a tea bag with water and fold it in half and bite down on it for 30 minutes. Tea contains tannic acid, a styptic, which may help reduce bleeding.

Swelling. This is normal following a surgical procedure in the mouth. It should reach its maximum in 48 hours and then diminish by the fifth post-operative day. The anti-swelling medicine we usually give cuts swelling down to less than a quarter of what it would normally be. Place ice or cold compresses on the face in the region of the surgery intermittently (20 minutes on and 20 minutes off). Ice is only effective on the day of surgery.

Discomfort. The most discomfort that you will experience will occur as the anesthetic wears off, usually 1 to 2 hours after surgery. If a long-acting anesthetic was used, you may be numb for much longer than normal. Do not wait for the pain to become severe before taking the medication since the medicine will require about 30 to 45 minutes to take effect. Pain will gradually diminish over the next few days.

Smoking. If you smoke, avoid smoking during the first week after surgery.

Diet. Eating immediately following the procedure is not recommended. When the numbness has worn off, you may eat.

A nutritious liquid diet is necessary for the first day. After the first 24 hours, you should maintain a diet of soft foods, such as Jell-O, pudding, yogurt, mashed potatoes, soups, etc. on the opposite side of the extraction. Food that crumbles such as potato chips, popcorn, cookies, etc. should be avoided. Hot spicy foods should also be avoided to prevent irritation and burns of the extraction site. Also avoid carbonated beverages for three to four days.

Keep anything sharp from entering the wound (e.g. eating utensils, fingers, etc.). It is also important to drink plenty of fluids in between meals and with meals. Return to a normal diet as

tolerated.

Activity. Rest for the first 24 to 48 hours.

Starting the day after surgery:

1. Brush teeth but avoid the surgery area. As you heal, you can gradually brush teeth near the surgery site. Soften the bristles first by placing them under hot water.
2. Use warm salt water as a mouth rinse (1 teaspoon salt in a glass of warm water) 3 to 5 times per day for 5 to 7 days after surgery.
3. If antibiotics are prescribed, be sure to take them all as directed. Note: They can render birth control pills ineffective.
4. Usually absorbable sutures are used and do not need to be removed. However, it is good to see your dentist 5 to 6 days after surgery for a check-up. If you have dry socket or another problem, it can be treated to prevent unnecessary pain.
5. Dry socket is a delayed healing response, which may occur during the 3rd to 6th post-operative day. It occurs in a lower socket and is associated with a throbbing pain on the side of the face, which may seem to be directed up toward the ear. Dry socket can be brought on by rinsing or spitting too much the first day, too much physical activity, using a straw, smoking, birth control pills, particularly difficult surgery, or pre-existing infection.

In mild cases, simply increasing the pain medication for a few days can control the symptoms. If this is unsuccessful, please call your doctor to arrange for some medication to be temporarily placed in the socket. Dry socket generally gets better whether treated or not.

Contact the doctor if:

1. Bleeding is excessive and cannot be controlled.
2. Allergies or other reactions to medications occur.
3. Discomfort is poorly controlled.
4. Swelling is excessive, spreading, or continuing to enlarge after 48 hours.
5. Allergies or other reactions to medications occur.

*If there is an emergency after office hours, please contact **Dr. Aristodemo at (708)790-8790.**