

Please read **ALL** of these instructions carefully prior to your day of surgery.

Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions below may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt follow these guidelines or call our office, 757-499-6886, for clarification.

Post Operative Instructions

First Hour

Bite down firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be gently removed after one hour. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 45 minutes to an hour). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning.

Care

Do not disturb the surgical area today. **DO NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least one week, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket.

Oozing

Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. It may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the areas and gently biting on the gauze for 45 minutes at a time. Note that the continuous use and implantation of gauze for a period of over 2 hours can sometimes be more harmful to the surgical site and the healing. Remove gauze while eating or sleeping.

Persistent bleeding

Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in very hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in moist gauze) for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

Swelling

Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It often increases for the first 2-3 days. 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 twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24-36 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed.

Pain

Oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better. Some patients find that pain medicine may cause nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances that nausea are reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. If you do not achieve adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with an analgesic such as Naprosyn or Ibuprofen. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off. If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. Do not drive or operate dangerous equipment, if taking a narcotic pain medication.

Nausea

Nausea sometimes occurs after surgery. Often, prescription pain medications are the cause. This can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better. Classic Coca Cola may help with nausea.

Diet

Eat any nourishing food that can be eaten with comfort. **AVOID EXTREMELY HOT FOODS. DO NOT USE A STRAW** for the first week after surgery. It is advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.). It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals. If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

Sharp edges

If you feel something hard or sharp (in the surgical areas) with your tongue, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally, small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. They are not pieces of teeth that have been left in. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECOND AND THIRD DAY

Mouth rinses

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily.

Brushing

Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort. Do not use electric toothbrushes the first week after surgery.

Warm applications

After 48 hours, you may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (warm water bottle, warm moist towels, and heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

Healing

Normal healing after tooth extraction should proceed as follows: The first 2-3 days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some degree of swelling. By the fourth day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the post-operative course should be ***GRADUAL STEADY IMPROVEMENT***. If you don't experience continued improvement, please call our office during business hours so we can assist you. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, **DO NOT** use it for the first seven days following your surgical procedure. On the eighth day start using the syringe daily utilizing the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

ATTENTION

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, please call the office at 757-499-6886. Hours are Monday through Thursday from 8 to 4:30 (8 to 3 on Friday).

A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.

NOTE: Calls for Narcotic (pain) medication refills are **ONLY** accepted during office hours.