

## Post-Operative Instructions for Dental Surgery

- **IMMEDIATE POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Go directly home from the office. **Attempt to eat a liquid diet food** and take your pain medications as soon as possible. Taking pain-meds on an empty stomach will cause nausea. **Consuming plenty of fluids and nutrition today is important and minimizes the risk of nausea/ vomiting.**
- Day of surgery only, **apply ice packs** to the area(s) of surgery to reduce future swelling and pain (**focus on the lower jaw** if you had your bottom wisdom teeth removed). Ice packs should be applied 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off for the first 24 hrs.
- **Bite down firmly on the gauze packs** that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place for around 20-30 minutes.

- **DIET:**

- **Utilize a liquid diet only for the first week** (ex: tomato soup, yogurt, mashed potatoes, protein shakes, ensure shakes, and pudding). **Softer diet from day 7-14**, it can include extremely over boiled pasta, scrambled eggs, well steamed vegetables. It is best to avoid foods with small seeds (ex: strawberries, rice) that can get lodged in the extraction areas. The reasoning for the soft diet is not based on your ability to eat the food. It is so if anything gets stuck into the extraction site, it will be able to dissolve and be flushed out.
- **Avoid the use of straws for 2 weeks** as the suction can pull bacteria into the surgical site and cause an infection or dry socket.
- Your food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. At least 5-6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat..

- **ACTIVITY:**

- Do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours. Do not engage in sports, aerobics, heavy work, or heavy lifting for seven days. Avoid the use of tobacco products and alcohol for at least seven days.

- **SURGICAL SITE CARE:**

- **Resume brushing your teeth**, as best as possible, **starting the night of the surgery** to reduce the risk of an infection.
- After meals, rinse your mouth very gently during the first 24 hours. Do not spit forcefully. Aggressive rinsing may dislodge blood clots and interrupt the normal healing process. Following the first day, rinsing after meals can be slightly more vigorous and it is generally a good idea to rinse with a warm diluted salt solution (1/4 teaspoon salt in 8 oz. water). **Avoid the use of commercial mouthwashes**, as they may contain alcohol, which can delay initial healing.
- When you depart the dental office, you will be biting on gauze. Bite on the gauze packing over the surgical site(s) for at least 20-30 minutes. **Apply constant firm pressure**, do not chew. It is common to have to replace gauze every 20-30 minutes for the first day. If bleeding persists, fold a piece of new gauze into a thick pad and place on the extraction site(s) and continue applying **constant biting pressure**. It is better to continually bite on the gauze than to keep changing it every few minutes. If the surgical site(s) are still bleeding after 1 hour, you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in hot water, squeezed damp-dry) for 20 or 30 minutes. Slight bleeding or oozing may occur following extractions and **is expected for the first 24 hrs**. Red tinged saliva is normal for a few days following surgery and is not indicative of bleeding. If excessive uncontrolled bleeding occurs, consult your surgeon.

- Two days after surgery, you may apply warm compresses (ex: a microwaved damp wash cloth) on the side of the face to aid in healing.
- **MEDICATIONS:**
  - **Normal swelling will reach a peak on the second to third day after surgery. This is also when discomfort tends to peak.** It is normal to have bruising in the area of the surgery. After day three, the remainder of the post-operative course should be a gradual but steady improvement.
    - Utilize the Ibuprofen (Motrin/ Advil) every 6 hours for the first 3 days regardless of pain to decrease post-op swelling
    - Never utilize pain medications on an empty stomach
    - **Take the following drugs according to your pain intensity**
      - **Mild Pain:** 600mg ibuprofen (Motrin) every 6 hours
      - **Moderate Pain:** 600mg Ibuprofen (Motrin) + one or two Acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 6 hours
  - If given a prescription mouth-wash, gently swish only 2-3 times daily. Do not rinse mouth after swishing.
  - If prescribed, take all antibiotics until gone.
- **THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS:**
  - Nausea is common after surgery. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with soft food and a large amount of water. Classic Coca Cola or ginger ale may help if nausea has occurred. Limited amounts of carbonated drinks are okay to consume.
  - Is can be **normal to be numb through the entire first night** of your surgery.
  - **Any sutures that were placed will dissolve on their own, anywhere from 3-10 days after surgery.**
  - If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, **do not use it until post op day 5.** Then use it daily until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket (usually 2-3 weeks).
  - If you have a **orthodontic retainer**, you may not be able utilize the retainer for 1 week after surgery.
  - Your case is individual, as no two mouths are alike. Do not accept well intended advice from friends. Discuss your problem with the persons best able to effectively help you, which are your surgeon and family dentist.
  - It is suggested to **keep this form with your surgeon's phone number for two months' post-surgery in case of any needs you may have (i.e. pain, infection, etc.).**

