

AFTER WISDOM TOOTH REMOVAL

The removal of impacted teeth is a serious surgical procedure. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

Immediately Following Surgery

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be kept in place for a 30 minutes. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery should be avoided for 48 hours. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- Take the prescribed pain medications before the numbness wears off to avoid discomfort.
- Restrict your physical activities for 3 days after surgery. You may resume normal activity after that when you feel comfortable.
- Place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for explanation.

Bleeding

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a moist gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If excessive bleeding does not subside, call for further instructions.

Swelling

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling may not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until approximately 3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Two baggies filled with ice, or ice packs should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. You can make your own ice packs by mixing 3 parts water to 1 part rubbing alcohol in ziploc bags and freezing to make a slush. These may be placed in tube socks that are tied together at one end, placed around the patient's head and tied at the top. This will help it stay on the surgical site. The ice packs should be on regularly while you are awake but allow face

to rewarm between applications. After 3 days, ice has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery and may last for up to one week. 3 days following surgery, the application of moist heat to the sides of the face is helpful in reducing the size of the swelling.

Pain

For moderate pain, one or two tablets of Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol may be taken every three to four hours or Ibuprofen, (Motrin or Advil) two-four 200 mg tablets may be taken every 3-4 hours.

For severe pain, take the tablets prescribed as directed. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office.

Diet

After I.V. sedation, liquids should be initially taken. Do not use straws for 2 days. Drink from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Refer to the section on suggested diet instructions at the end of the brochure. Nourishment should be taken regularly. You should prevent dehydration by taking fluids regularly. Your food intake may 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. Caution: If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy. If you are lying down following surgery, make sure you sit for one minute before standing.

Keep the mouth clean

You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse very gently. 2 days after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 5-6 times a day especially after eating with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt.

Discoloration

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post-operatively. Moist heat applied to the area 3 days after surgery may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

Antibiotics

If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. Call the office if you have any questions.

Nausea and Vomiting

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on coke, tea or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a 15 minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine.

Other Complications

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation. So be careful. Call our office if you have any questions.
- Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.
- You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. You were not able to eat or drink prior to surgery. It was also difficult to take fluids. Taking pain medications can make you dizzy. You could get light headed when you stand up suddenly. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute then get up.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots, they are the bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed subsequently.
- If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as vaseline.
- Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.
- Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

Finally

Sutures are placed the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged, this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. Depending on the type of suture used it will dissolve in 1-3 weeks.

The pain and swelling should reach it's peak 3 days after surgery, then subside more and more each day. If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur call our office for instructions.

There will be a void where the tooth was removed. The void will gradually over the next month fill in with the new tissue. In the meantime, the area should be kept clean especially after meals with salt water rinses or a toothbrush.

Your case is unique, no two mouths are alike. If you have questions or concerns regarding your situation please call the office for advice.

Brushing your teeth is okay – just be gentle at the surgical sites.

A dry socket is when the blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and even pain to the ear may occur for days following surgery. If this does not continue to resolve call the office.

If you are involved in regular exercise, do not resume it until at least 3 days after surgery. Be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get light headed, stop exercising.