
Surgical Instructions For Home Care After Oral Surgery

Impacted wisdom teeth, Surgical Extractions, Apicectomies, Minor bone grafting
Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

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 carefully rinsing old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for thirty minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened, squeeze dried tea bag (not Rooibos tea) for sixty minutes, repeat as necessary. The tannic acid in the dry 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 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 will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Two zip lock plastic bags filled with ice, or ice packs should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left for 30 minutes, followed by a 30 minute rest period. Repeat the 30 minute cycle for 24 hours only. After 24 hours, 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. Thirty-six hours following surgery, the application of moist heat to the sides of the face is beneficial in reducing the size of the swelling

Pain

Pain or discomfort following surgery is normal. These symptoms should subside more and more every day. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office.

Diet

You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Ensure nutritional shakes can be taken to supplement your diet. Nourishment should be taken regularly. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat. 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. Drink from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot.

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.

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Keep the mouth clean

No vigorous rinsing or spitting of any kind are allowed. Vigorous rinsing will dislodge the blood clot and you will develop a dry socket. An osteitis or dry socket is very painful and will require additional surgery to correct it. The blood clot can also become infected or necrotic from smoking. You are advised not to smoke for 72 hours after surgery.

Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and even pain to the ear may occur 2-3 days following surgery. This is normal. Pain should however not increase with time. Call the office if this occurs.

You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but please remember to rinse gently. The day 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. Also use the Andolex C oral rinse as prescribed.

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 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 fifteen-minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine. Should the nausea or vomiting persist, call Dr White.

Possible post-operative symptoms

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. Should you have any questions, please call the office for an appointment.

Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office.

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 by Dr. White

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.

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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. Your nose and throat can also be sensitive from the anaesthetic tube that was passed through.

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. Additional physiotherapy treatment will assist to shorten this period.

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

Your case is individual, 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: Dr. White or your family dentist.

Brushing your teeth is advised— just be gentle at the surgical sites.

Try not to exercise for the first three post-operative days. Your heart rate increases during exercise and can cause new bleeding. Also be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get light headed, stop exercising.