

Oral & Maxillofacial surgery

321-631-7000

Drs. Gerald W. Bird & Jay A. Johnson

Surgical Instructions

Post Operative Instructions

Wound Care

1. Bite firmly on the gauze pack placed in your mouth until you arrive home. Replace it every 45 minutes to one hour, removing it gently. Do so until bedtime.
2. Do NOT smoke for at least one week – smoking interferes with healing and causes painful dry sockets which will require multiple visits to pack the socket.

Bleeding

1. Some blood will ooze from the surgical site for 24 to 48 hours - this is normal. You may find a blood stain on your pillow in the morning, so it is advisable to use an old pillowcase or a towel over your pillow the first night following surgery.
2. Do NOT spit or draw fluids through a straw for one week following surgery. Spitting and use of a straw promotes bleeding and may cause a painful dry socket.
3. If bleeding begins again, place a small damp gauze pack directly over the tooth socket and bite firmly for one (1) hour. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for 30 minutes. Please use regular tea bags, not decaffeinated or herbal varieties. Do not talk while gauze or tea bag is in mouth.
4. Keep your head elevated with several pillows or sit in a lounge chair.

Discomfort

1. Some discomfort is normal after surgery. It can be controlled but not eliminated by taking the pain medication prescribed for you.
2. Take your medications as they are prescribed or written. Take them with water and with food as some medications may cause nausea.
3. Do NOT drive or operate machinery while taking pain medication.
4. Do NOT drink alcohol while taking pain medication.

NOTE: Narcotic pain medication can only be prescribed during normal business hours!!!

Diet

1. It is important to drink large volumes of fluids. Do not drink fluids through a straw for the first week. This promotes bleeding and can delay healing.
2. Eat soft foods, such as pasta, mashed potatoes, soup, eggs or meal replacement drinks as soon as possible after surgery. Cold, soft foods such as ice cream, yogurt, pudding and jello may be comforting for the first day.
3. Avoid hard or crunchy foods or any that are very hot or spicy. Avoid alcoholic beverages while you are taking pain medication.

Oral Hygiene (Keep the mouth clean)

1. Do NOT rinse your mouth or brush your teeth for the first 12 hours after surgery.
2. After 12 hours, rinse gently with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 oz. of warm water) every 4 hours.
3. After 12 hours, you may brush your teeth, but do so gently and avoid the surgery area. Do not use a waterpik, mouthwash or hydrogen peroxide as they delay the healing process.

Swelling

1. Swelling after surgery is a normal body reaction. It reaches its maximum about 48-72 hours after surgery and can last 4-6 days.
2. Apply ice packs over the area of surgery for 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off during the first 24 hours. This helps decrease the swelling as well as providing some comfort.

Rest

Avoid strenuous activities for at least 48 hours following surgery.

Bruising

You may experience some mild bruising in the area of your surgery. This is a normal response in some people and should not cause alarm. It will disappear in 7-14 days.

Stiffness (Trismus)

Following surgery you may experience jaw muscle stiffness and limited opening of your mouth. This is normal and will improve in 5-10 days. Using warm moist towels to your face 24 hours after surgery may help with the stiffness.

Stitches

There will be stitches placed at your surgery site. If they are the kind that need to be removed, we will schedule an appointment for you for one week to 10 days post-operatively. Stitches may become loose but this is not cause for concern.

Medications

Take medications as directed. You may be prescribed medications such as one for pain, one for swelling, an anti-inflammatory and possibly an antibiotic. We will explain the medications that have been prescribed to you.

Immediate Dentures

If you have had extractions and new dentures or partials placed, do not remove them for 24 hours. Thereafter, they can be removed to rinse your mouth and the prosthesis 3-4 times per day. Dentures should be left in as much as possible the first week after extractions, unless otherwise instructed.

Extraction Site

You may notice a “hole” in your gum after an extraction. The cavity will gradually fill in over the next month with new tissue. Rinse your mouth after meals as directed to keep it clean and free from food particles.

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 it so be careful. Call our office if you have any questions about this.
- You should be careful going from a lying down position to standing. Pain medications can make you dizzy and you could get light-headed when you stand up suddenly. Before standing, you should sit for one minute then get up slowly.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard or sharp projections in the mouth with their tongue. These are not “roots,” or tooth fragments. They are the bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections will usually smooth out, but if they are painful, they can be removed by one of our doctors.
- 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 should subside in 2-3 days.

Finally

- The pain and swelling should subside more and more each day following surgery. If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur call our office for instructions.

- Your case is individual, no two mouths are alike. Discuss any problem with the persons best able to effectively help you: our doctors or your family dentist.
- A dry socket is when the blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of a dry socket are throbbing pain at the surgical site and even pain into the ear which may occur 3-4 days following surgery and is not relieved by pain medication. Call the office if this occurs.
- If you are involved in regular exercise be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced and exercise may weaken you. If you get light-headed stop exercising.

After Placement of Dental Implants

It is important to the success of your implant to be cautious with the surgical site. There is often a metal healing cap present at the gum level. Do not disturb the wound. Avoid rinsing, spitting, chewing on or touching the wound on the day of surgery. Be gentle with tooth brushing by surgical areas. If you have received a prescribed mouthwash (Peridex) from us, please follow the directions on the bottle.

If you have a prosthetic device (flipper, partial, or dentures) we will advise you on specific instructions for your particular case, on when and how often you should or should not be using these devices.

Call the office if:

1. You have excessive bleeding that you cannot control by biting on the gauze.
2. You have increased swelling after the third day following your surgery.
3. You have a fever.
4. You have any questions.

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