

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 half hour. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded. You may need to change this packing if bleeding continues.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- The prescription pain medication that is prescribed should be taken before the discomfort from the procedure onsets. The local anesthesia that we deliver during the surgery should last between 4-6 hours. Prescription medication should be taken approximately 1 hour before this anesthesia wears off.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity 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 gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for thirty minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. 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 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 placed on the skin for

approximately 20-30 minutes then remove for 5 minutes. This prevents freezing of the skin near the site. 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. Twenty-four hours following surgery the application of moist heat to the sides of the face is beneficial in healing.

Pain

For moderate pain, Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) is advised. Note the significant precautions if taking Ibuprofen.

For severe pain take the medication prescribed for pain 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 bleeding has stopped liquids may be taken at first. Do not use straws. 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 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. Caution: If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy. Therefore, immediately following surgery, if you are lying down, make sure you sit for one minute before standing.

Keep the mouth clean

No rinsing of any kind should be done until 12 hours following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse gently. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 3-4 times a day especially after eating with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt. If chlorhexidine rinses have been prescribed, rinse for 30 seconds, then spit out, you should do this twice a day.

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 an antibiotic take the medication as directed. 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. Sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine. If nausea and vomiting continues past 3 hours-call the office.

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. Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen may be taken to reduce the fever.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in their mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are the bony walls that supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed at our office.
- 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 or Vitamin E cream.
- 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 in 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. The sutures may require removal approximately one week after surgery. The removal of sutures requires no anesthesia or needles. It takes only a minute or so, and there is no discomfort associated with this procedure.

- 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.
- There will be a hole where the tooth was removed. The hole will gradually fill in over the next month with the new tissue. In the mean time, the area should be kept clean especially after meals with salt-water rinses or a toothbrush.
- A dry socket occurs 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 3-4 days following surgery.
- If you are involved in a normal exercise routine, you should reduce your routine for the first 48 hours or as appropriate for your condition.
- Your case is individual no two surgeries are alike. Discuss any post op problem with the persons best able to effectively help you: our office or your family dentist.