



Post-Operative Care for Extraction

Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and complications such as infection and swelling can be minimized if these instructions are followed carefully.

Immediately Following Surgery

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be kept in the surgical site applying pressure.
- Do not chew on the gauze.
- Change gauze every 20-30 minutes until _____. Please discontinue gauze past this time.
- Eat and start pain medicine by _____. Also begin 800 mg of ibuprofen every 4 hours.
- If you received an antibiotic, please start it tonight.
- Use the provided ice packs to apply ice today and tomorrow. Switching to heat on the 3rd day.
- The gel pack may be heated in the microwave for 30 seconds at a time.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing and/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.
- Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as you begin to feel discomfort. This will usually coincide with the local anesthetic becoming diminished.
- 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 a more thorough explanation.

Rinsing

Do not rinse your mouth until the day after surgery. If the surgical site does not have sutures, there will be a void where the tooth was removed. The void will fill in the tissue over the next few weeks. In that time, the area should be kept clean with your curved syringe. The day after surgery you will begin rinsing 3-4 times a day, especially after eating. Use the curved syringe to draw up a ¼ teaspoon of salt mixed into 1 cup of warm water. You can start brushing your teeth gently that same evening. Please be gentle near surgical sites.

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 black tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the black tea helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. If bleeding does not subside, call our office for further instructions. Sutures may be placed in that area to minimize bleeding. Unless told otherwise, the sutures will dissolve in 7-10 days after surgery. When they start dissolving if they become bothersome, you may cut the loose ends.

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. 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. The ice packs should be left on continuously while you are awake. After 36 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

Most pain and discomfort can be managed with over-the-counter pain medication at regular intervals. It is harder to play "catch up" to control pain than to stay on top of the scheduled medications. For moderate pain, one or two tablets of Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol may be taken every 3-4 hours. Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) may be taken instead of Tylenol. Ibuprofen bought over the counter comes in 200 mg tablets: You may take 800 mg every 4-6 hours as needed. The prescribed medication should be taken as directed. Do not take any of the above medication if you are allergic to them or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it. 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

Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid hot liquids or food. Soft foods should be eaten on the day of surgery. Drink from a glass and 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. Do not to miss any meals. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat.

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 any other unfavorable reaction and contact our office immediately. 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.

Other Complications

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As reviewed in your consultation, 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. Call Dr. Johnson 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 could get lightheaded from low blood sugar or medications. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute before getting 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.
- 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 is not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.
- As discussed in your initial exam, do not use tobacco products for at least 1 week.

- 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.

Your case is unique, no two mouths are alike. Discuss any problems with our office.

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 near the ear may occur 2-3 days following surgery. Call the office if this occurs.

If you are involved in regular exercise, be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get lightheaded, stop exercising.

We hope that your recovery will be smooth and pleasant. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office. A 24-hour answering service is available. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.