

Your Postoperative Care

To assist you in your recovery, our office provides a postoperative kit for your convenience. Your kit may include: gauze dressings, chemical cold packs & OTC analgesics like acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

What will my experience be after oral surgery?

Most surgery patients are unfamiliar with what is normal postoperative recovery and what is atypical. Here are a few things to look for.

- Bleeding** Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal. Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, try repositioning fresh gauze packs to allow you to place firm pressure over the area. Always hold pressure for a minimum of 45 minutes at a time. If bleeding persists you may **substitute a tea bag** for the gauze. Wet the tea bag with hot water, squeeze it damp-dry and wrap it in a moist gauze. Apply pressure over the surgical area for 45 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office. Gauze will look light pink, spotted, or rusty colored when bleeding is controlled. When bleeding is controlled, gauze may be left out.
- Swelling** Often, there is some swelling associated with oral surgery. You can minimize this by using a cold pack or ice bag wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the face or cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off during the first 12 hours after surgery.
- Nausea** In nearly all cases, if you experience nausea it is most likely from your prescribed narcotic pain medication. Allow the nausea to subside and take a smaller dose at your next interval. Often breaking the tablet in half is sufficient to control pain without nausea. If nausea persists, please call our office.
- Diet** Take out gauze packs while eating. Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., that may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you can progress to solid foods at your own pace. It is important to not skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. Do not use a straw, spit, or suck on anything. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits as much as possible. Follow instructions from us or your physician regarding your insulin schedule.
- Pain** Unfortunately, all oral surgery procedures are accompanied by variable amounts of discomfort. Each person and experience is unique. Typical pain symptoms peak 1-2 days after the procedure and may last 3-7 days. Prescription pain medications will be used when appropriate. We often recommend supplementing with non-prescription pain medications like Ibuprofen. It is important that prescription and non-prescription medications be used only as instructed, including all listed precautions.

Additional Instructions following surgery

- Use Caution** Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do **NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects or your fingers. **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since it is detrimental to healing.
- Brushing** Begin your normal hygiene routine the day after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing of all areas, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the limits of comfort.
- Syringe** If you were given an irrigating syringe, start using it the fifth day after surgery to keep sockets clean. Mix one teaspoon of salt dissolved in a tall glass of warm water. fill the syringe with the warm salt water and irrigate any open sockets gently, especially after eating.
- Sharp Edges** If you feel sharp edges in the surgical area with your tongue, it is probably the bony walls which originally supported the teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the first week or two after surgery. They are not pieces of tooth, but if they are bothersome, we will remove them. Please call the office if you are concerned.
- Dry Sockets** Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follow: The first three days after surgery are usually the most uncomfortable and there is some degree of swelling and stiffness/soreness of the jaw. From the third day on, GRADUAL, STEADY IMPROVEMENT should mark the remainder of your post-operative course. If there is a noticeable, distinct, persistent throbbing pain in the jaw that arises after the 4th day, please call our office. We would like the opportunity to help alleviate any discomfort.

Special Instructions _____

Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have any questions about your healing progress, please call the office. It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you need to reach the doctor after hours, call our office and the message will direct you how to reach the doctor after hours. If he doesn't answer when you call, leave a message and he will generally be able to return your call within 30 minutes. If you have any bleeding that cannot be stopped, have difficulty breathing, severe allergic reactions to medication or any other life threatening condition, go to the ER immediately.