



Post-Operative Instructions for Oral Surgery

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Sometimes, the effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so all of the information provided below may not apply to you or the person you are caring for. When in doubt, please follow the guidelines listed below, or contact the office at (512) 992-1378. In the event that our office number does not ring through to the answering service, please call Medlink at (512) 660-6803. They will reach out to the physician with your concerns.

Day of Surgery: A surgical technician will place gauze packs onto the surgical area(s) immediately after your procedure and you will leave the office with gauze in your mouth. Bite down gently, but firmly, on the gauze ensuring that they remain in place. Do not change them during the first hour unless the bleeding remains persistent and they become too soiled. Otherwise, packets should be gently removed after one hour. *****TIP***** Moisten the gauze pack slightly with water and loosely fold to keep the gauze from sticking*** If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to maintain pressure over the surgical site(s) for another 30 minutes. Continue to do this every 30 – 45 minutes as needed until active bleeding subsides.

Intermittent bleeding (oozing) overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze over the area(s) and biting as previously done immediately post operatively. You should elevate your head by propping it on several pillows as you rest or sleep to inhibit bleeding and to prevent the gauze from being swallowed.

Bleeding should never be severe. If this occurs, it usually means that the packs are being pinched between two teeth only, and pressure is not being exerted on the surgical areas appropriately. Try repositioning the packs. If the bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a tea bag that has been soaked in ice water and squeezed to damp dry. Wrap the cold, damp tea bag in a moist gauze pad for 20-30 minutes. If the bleeding remains uncontrolled, please contact our office.

Pain: Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. The most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic has worn off. **If you take the first pill before the local anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to better manage any discomfort.** You may have been given a prescription for pain medication. Do NOT take any medication on an empty stomach. Please eat, wait 30 minutes, then take the pain medication. This should help reduce the nausea that can occur when taking pain medicine. If you do not achieve adequate pain relief at first, you may supplement with an over the counter analgesic/anti-inflammatory such as Ibuprofen or Alleve. Please speak with your physician for supplemental instructions.

Swelling: Is often associated with oral surgery. This can be minimized by using an ice pack. Apply the cold pack firmly to the outside of the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied every 20 minutes, alternating sides during the first 24 waking hour(s) after surgery. If you have been given a prescription to control swelling, be sure to take as directed.

Nausea: Nausea occasionally occurs after surgery. Sometimes the pain medicine is the cause. Nausea can be reduced by eating prior to taking any medication, especially your pain medicine. It can also be reduced by drinking plenty of clear fluids. Make sure to drink a large amount of water each time you take the pain medicine. If you have tried these methods and are still finding no relief from nausea, use the anti-nausea medication that was prescribed to you.

Healing: Normal healing after a tooth extraction should be as follows: The first 2 days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. Swelling and discomfort tends to peak on the 3rd day after surgery and should get gradually better each day after. The remainder of the postoperative course should be a gradual, steady improvement. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. **If you were given a plastic irrigation syringe, do not use it for the first 7 days.** After that time has passed, use it daily as instructed until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particle lodging in the socket.

Diet: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. **DO NOT SKIP MEALS!** On the day of surgery, you may be restricted to a "soft cold food" diet until the numbness wears off, or for the first 24 hours depending on what type of oral surgery you had. Examples of this diet are foods such as, but not limited to: soups at room temperature or below, yogurt, pudding, shakes, smoothies, apple sauce, milk shakes, etc.) For food items such as smoothies and shakes, make sure they are thick enough that a spoon can be used. **DO NOT USE A STRAW FOR THE FIRST 7 DAYS** following the surgery. Avoid extremely hot foods. Avoid carbonated and alcoholic beverages for 5 days. Avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, chips, etc., which may get lodged in the empty socket areas. Over the next several days, you may gradually progress to solid foods. Start with softer foods such as macaroni and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, etc. and progress as you feel comfortable, avoiding food items that may be chewy, sticky or sharp. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow the instructions given by your doctor. If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster.

Brushing: Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

Mouth Rinse: In addition to brushing it is helpful to lightly rinse the surgical areas with warm salt water after meals. Be mindful to avoid swishing vigorously. If your physician has prescribed a mouth rinse, you will begin using as directed beginning the day after surgery.

Hot Compress: After 2 days, we recommend applying a warm, moist compress (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad, etc.) to the skin over the areas of swelling for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease the swelling and stiffness.

Sharp Edges: If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical site(s), it is likely that you are feeling the bony walls which once supported the extracted tooth. Occasionally, small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.

Things NOT to Do:

- Do not drink carbonated beverages or use a straw on the day of surgery.
- Do not rinse or spit on the day of surgery.
- Do not smoke during the first week after surgery.
- Do not use mouthwashes for the first week after surgery (unless prescribed).
- Do not drink alcohol on the day of surgery or if you are taking prescription pain medicine.
- Do not drive on the day of surgery if IV sedation was used or anything you are taking narcotic pain relievers.
- Please avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise for the first 48 hours.

These instructions are general to oral surgery. If you have a concern or question that is not addressed above, please contact the office at (512) 992-1378. In the event that our office number does not ring through to the answering service, please call Medlink at (512) 660-6803. They will reach out to the physician with your concerns.