

GENERAL POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Bleeding

Excessive or continued bleeding may be controlled by first rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth and then placing a new moist gauze pad over the area with firm biting pressure for an additional hour and repeating as necessary. If bleeding continues, you may bite on a moistened tea bag in the same manner. Tannic acid in tea helps blood to clot. If bleeding does not subside, please call our office for further instructions.

Sutures

Sutures may be placed to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help with healing. The sutures will be dissolved approximately 1 week after surgery. If they become dislodged early, there is no cause for alarm. Remove the loose suture from your mouth and discard it.

Swelling

Most swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 48–72 hours post-operatively. However, swelling and discomfort may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Ice packs should be applied to the outside of the face over the area where surgery was performed for the first 24–48 hours. Ice packs should be placed on for 20 minutes, then removed for 20 minutes. After 48 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. Instead, after 48 hours, the application of heat may help reduce the size of the swelling more quickly. On occasion, some residual swelling may last a week or longer.

Pain

Take the prescribed pain medication before you begin to feel discomfort. This usually coincides with the start of the local anesthetic wearing off. Taking pain medication on an empty stomach may cause nausea, so it is recommended to take the pills with food or drink. Pain medication may slow down your reflexes and impair your judgment. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery while medicated. It is also best to avoid alcoholic beverages when recovering, using narcotics, or taking antibiotics. Aspirin or other over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®/Motrin®) may be used when appropriate. Discomfort following surgery may increase on the second or third day following the procedure and then should improve each day thereafter. If pain persists or worsens after 4 days, please notify our office, as it may require attention.

Bruising

In some cases, bruising of the skin may follow swelling. This is a normal post-operative occurrence that may occur 2–3 days after the procedure and take 1–2 weeks to gradually fade away.

Diet

It is best to wait until after the local anesthetic has completely worn off before beginning to eat. You may eat anything soft and cool on the first day by chewing away from the surgical site. Do not use straws, as this may encourage more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. Do not drink hot fluids or eat hot food on the first day. Avoid hard, crunchy foods that may disturb the area. It's best to progress to more solid foods and return to your normal diet as soon as possible.

Oral Hygiene

Begin gentle, warm saltwater rinses with 1 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water the morning after your surgery. Rinsing 4–5 times a day for several days, especially after meals, will help to flush away food particles gently. Continue to brush your teeth as best as you can, remembering to stay away from the surgical site(s) for several days. Be sure to keep the surgical area(s) clean to promote better healing.

GENERAL POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS (CONT.)

Antibiotics

Antibiotics may be prescribed for certain patients after a surgical procedure to help prevent or cure an infection. If you have been placed on an antibiotic, take it as directed on the prescription until gone. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or any other unfavorable reaction and notify our office immediately.

Nausea and Vomiting

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least 30 minutes, including prescribed medicines. Sitting in a darkened environment, limiting movement, and applying a cold compress to your forehead may be helpful. Taking an over-the-counter diphenhydramine (Benadryl®) may stave off mild nausea. Start again with bland fluids (water, ginger ale, 7Up®, Sprite), sipping them slowly over 15 minutes. When nausea subsides, begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medications again. If nausea persists or you have trouble keeping anything down, notify the office, as an anti-nausea medication may be necessary.

Activities

It is best to avoid strenuous activity for a day or two following your extraction, as this may cause the extraction site to start bleeding again. After a few days, you should feel fine to resume your normal routine.

The use of tobacco products slows down the healing process and may lead to other complications. We strongly recommend avoiding tobacco products for at least 7 days following surgery.