

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: WISDOM TEETH REMOVAL

Pain

Discomfort is normal after the extraction of teeth. If you are not allergic or intolerant to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, start taking ibuprofen (also known as Advil® or Motrin®) as instructed by your doctor after your surgery. If you are asthmatic, do not take ibuprofen unless you have tolerated it in the past. Sometimes a narcotic is prescribed for wisdom teeth procedures. Ibuprofen and your prescribed narcotic may be taken together. Please take your pain medicines with food; this will help prevent nausea. **Caution:** narcotic pain medicine will impair your judgment and reflexes.

Bleeding

Gauze pad(s) should be placed directly over the extraction site(s) and held in place with firm biting pressure; proper placement will help you not swallow blood, which can make you nauseated. Replace the gauze pad(s) every 30-45 minutes. When the gauze pads have little blood on them, they are no longer necessary. **Do not sleep with gauze in.** The amount of bleeding will vary from person to person. Most of your bleeding will slow within 4-6 hours, but a small amount of bleeding is common for up to 48 hours.

Oral Hygiene

Do not rinse on the day of surgery; it may prolong your bleeding. Begin saltwater rinses the day after surgery and continue for 1 week. Rinse with warm salt water 4-5 times each day. To make saltwater, dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a small glass of warm tap water.

If you have been given an irrigating syringe, start irrigation on the 7th day after surgery. Fill the syringe with warm salt water and place the tip of the syringe into the extraction site to clean. Do this 3-4 times a day for 2 weeks and lessen as the surgical site heals.

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 use of ice packs when awake and sleeping with your head elevated over your heart. 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.

Diet

You may eat after your surgery, and we recommend starting with clear liquids, such as apple juice, tea, or broth. Gradually ramp up your diet as tolerated to soft foods like macaroni and cheese on the day of your procedure. Always cool down any hot foods or liquids during the first 24 hours. If you were sedated for surgery, dairy foods may cause nausea. You should eat only soft foods for the first week: for example, ground meats, pancakes, soups, eggs, mashed potatoes, and meatloaf are fine. For 2 weeks, do not eat hard, crunchy, or very chewy foods, such as European breads, pizza crust, steak or jerky, nuts, raw carrots, or popcorn. To help prevent dry socket, do not use a straw for the first week after surgery.

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: WISDOM TEETH REMOVAL (CONT.)

Brushing

Begin brushing your teeth within 24 hours after surgery. It is important to brush all of your teeth, even if the teeth and gums are sensitive. Bacterial plaque and food accumulation near the extraction site will delay healing and may cause infections.

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.

Smoking and Vaping

Do not smoke or vape for at least a week. Both will increase your bleeding; the nicotine and tar in tobacco impair healing and may cause a dry socket.

Exercise

It's okay to take a leisurely 1-mile walk the day after surgery or do light house chores. Unless told otherwise, do not engage in vigorous physical activity for 3 days following your surgery. Vigorous physical activity increases your blood pressure, which will cause an increase in swelling, pain, and bleeding. You may gradually increase your activity, such as jogging or tennis, 3-4 days after your surgery.