



POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: GENERAL

Bleeding is to be expected following oral surgical procedures. The gauze placed after surgery in your mouth should be held with moderate pressure for a minimum of 1 hour. Avoid opening your mouth or talking unless absolutely necessary. Do not displace the gauze packs. No spitting the first 24 hours — this causes more severe bleeding. Continued oozing of blood mixed with saliva is expected for 24 hours. If excessive bleeding persists, please contact us for further instruction.

Do not perform any vigorous rinsing of your mouth for 24 hours. Try to maintain your oral hygiene with normal tooth brushing as much as possible. After 24 hours, a warm saltwater solution (1 teaspoon of salt mixed with warm water) should be used to rinse your mouth 4–5 times daily, particularly after meals, for approximately 1 week. Commercial mouth rinses are not recommended since they tend to contain alcohol and other irritants, which can delay healing.

Take the pain medication as directed. Usually, the first dose should be taken immediately after surgery before the local anesthetic has had time to wear off. Please have something in your stomach prior to taking the pain medication. Do not mix the pain medication prescribed by your doctor with other pain medications or narcotics unless instructed to do so!

It is important to maintain your fluids and your nutrition during your recovery period. Your diet should consist of plenty of fluids; however, you should avoid alcoholic or carbonated beverages, as they can irritate the surgical sites. Soft foods, such as mashed potatoes, cereals, milk, puddings, custards, and protein shakes, are excellent sources of nutrition for the first 72 hours. You can remedy nausea by sipping flat Coke.

A certain degree of swelling, and perhaps bruising, may be experienced after surgery. The swelling can increase for up to 3 days after surgery. Ice packs should be placed for 10–15 minutes on and off during the first 24 hours. The swelling should begin to subside slowly after the first 2–3 days. If sutures are placed, they can come out anywhere from 3 to 10 days following surgery.

Following the removal of impacted teeth, moderate to severe discomfort is to be expected, as well as a slight elevation in temperature. Your pain medication is expected to make this tolerable. The discomfort should be less the following day and decrease in severity over the next 3–4 days. If the discomfort does not decrease or returns after the 3–4 days, then we should see you back. If in doubt, call for re-evaluation of the surgical areas.

Numbness or abnormal sensations at the corners of the mouth or lips on the side the surgery was performed may develop. This is a temporary condition, which usually corrects itself after a few days or sometimes a few weeks. However, there is no guarantee that the sensation will completely return. Patients who had multiple teeth removed may experience small chips of bone that work their way out of the extraction sites; this is a normal occurrence and can occur up to 6 weeks after surgery.

Through proper care of your mouth and special attention to sound nutrition following oral surgery procedures, you should experience rapid healing and reduced complications, minimizing your recovery time.