



POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS: DENTAL EXTRACTION

Proper post-operative care after surgery is very important to optimize the healing process and to reduce the complications of tooth extractions.

Immediately Following Surgery for Tooth Extraction

The gauze pack should be kept in place with firm pressure over the area from which the tooth was extracted. Remove the pack after 30 minutes. If there is continued excessive bleeding, replace with new gauze and bite firmly again. Vigorous mouth rinsing or chewing in the areas of the tooth extraction should be avoided. This may cause increased bleeding or the blood clot to dislodge.

A liquid or soft diet is recommended for the first 24 hours after tooth extraction. Avoid sucking through straws and eating hard or crunchy foods and spicy foods. Take the prescribed pain medication before the numbness from the local anesthesia wears off. Restrict your activities on the day of surgery and return to normal activities slowly. Place ice packs on the outside of the face where the tooth extractions were done. Use ice for the first 24 hours to decrease swelling by applying it on and off 20–30 minutes at a time.

Bleeding After Tooth Extraction

Slight bleeding and redness in the saliva are common after tooth extraction surgery. If there is excess bleeding, gently wipe any old clots from the mouth and then place clean new gauze over the area and bite firmly for 30–40 minutes. Repeat every 30–40 minutes with new gauze. If excessive bleeding continues, bite on a cold-water-moistened tea bag firmly for 30–40 minutes. Slowly remove the tea bag and leave the area alone. If there is still continued excessive bleeding, call our office for further instructions. Also, avoid excessive talking, drinking from a straw, or excessive chewing if there is continued bleeding.

Swelling After Tooth Extraction

Swelling is normal after any surgical procedure involving tooth extraction. The extent of swelling varies and depends on the extent of the surgery and each patient. Swelling around the mouth, jaws, cheeks, and below the eyes is not uncommon. The swelling will usually reach its maximum 2–3 days after the tooth extraction procedure. The swelling can be decreased by the immediate use of ice packs in the first 24 hours. Ice packs should be applied to the outside next to where the surgery was done. Keep the ice on for 20–30 minutes at a time, and then remove for 20–30 minutes. Also, sitting upright and not lying flat on the first day will help to decrease the amount of swelling. You may have been prescribed other anti-inflammatory medications such as dexamethasone (Decadron®). If you were prescribed these medications, follow the instructions written on the bottle.

Pain After Tooth Extraction

Pain medications are normally required after tooth extraction surgery. If you can take ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®), take 400–600 mg every 6–8 hours or as prescribed by your doctor. Ibuprofen will help with pain relief and as an anti-inflammatory. If you cannot take ibuprofen, then 1–2 tablets of regular Tylenol® should be taken every 4 hours. If you were prescribed a stronger pain medication such as Vicodin®, Norco®, or Lortab® (hydrocodone with acetaminophen), Tylenol with codeine, or Percocet® (oxycodone with acetaminophen), you can take that in addition to your ibuprofen if the pain is severe. Follow the directions written on your prescription bottle. If you do take any of these medications, do not drive or work around machinery. Also, avoid alcohol while taking these medications.

You may have been dispensed a syringe with a gel called SockIt!®. This should be used by applying at least 4–6 times a day on the extraction site the first few days. This will provide pain relief and promote healing. With the curved tip attached to the syringe, apply to the extraction site with just enough to cover the area. Keep your tongue away from the area. This gel will help soothe the area and decrease the need for other pain medications.

If the pain is severe, not controlled with your medications, or persists, call our office for further instructions.

Oral Hygiene After Tooth Extraction Surgery

Rinsing should not be done the day of tooth extraction surgery. On the day after surgery, gentle rinsing with warm salt water should be done after each meal. You can brush your teeth the day after your tooth extraction, but be careful not to traumatize the area where the surgery was done.



POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS: DENTAL EXTRACTION (CONT.)

Diet After Tooth Extraction

If you had IV sedation or general anesthesia for your tooth extraction procedure, liquids should be initially taken. Your diet can then progress to more solids as tolerated. Ensure adequate fluids and nutrition to prevent dehydration.

Nausea and Vomiting After Tooth Extraction

After IV sedation or general anesthesia for a tooth extraction, some patients may feel nauseated and vomit. To help avoid this problem, do not take your medications on an empty stomach. Hold off on your medications, if possible, until the nausea subsides. Try to stay hydrated with liquids. Sometimes patients feel nauseated from the prescribed pain medications, particularly the stronger pain medications such as hydrocodone or oxycodone (Vicodin or Percocet). Try stopping the pain medications and see if nausea subsides. If you have continued nausea and vomiting, call our office for further instructions.

Bruising and Discoloration After Tooth Extraction

After tooth extraction, some patients may notice bruising or discoloration around the areas of surgery. This is normal postoperatively and can take several days to subside.

Jaw Tightness or Limited Mouth Opening After Tooth Extraction

This is normal following tooth extraction and will improve and resolve over time. On occasion, you may be shown jaw exercises to help increase your jaw opening.

Dizziness or Lightheadedness After Tooth Extraction

After IV sedation or general anesthesia, some patients may feel dizzy when standing up. Always have someone watching you the first 24 hours after sedation. Do not get up quickly from a sitting or lying position, and make sure to remain hydrated with fluids.

Smoking After Tooth Extraction

Smoking can inhibit the healing process and can cause more pain after surgery. To ensure the best post-operative recovery, refrain from smoking as long as possible after surgery.

If you have any questions or concerns following your tooth extraction, please don't hesitate to call our office. We are on call 24 hours a day.