

## Post-Operative Instructions: General

Good healing requires good nutrition. For the first 12 hours, your diet should be soft, cool, and creamy.

- Malts
- Milkshakes
- Yogurt
- Instant Breakfast
- Ice Cream
- Fruit Juices
- Applesauce
- V8® Juice
- Ensure®/Boost®
- Baby Foods

For days 2 through 7, your diet should be soft and include nutritious food high in protein and vitamins.

- Milk
- Cheese
- Ground Beef/Turkey
- Eggs
- Fish
- Cream of Wheat
- Mashed Potatoes
- V8® Juice
- Pastas
- Chicken Soup
- Yogurts
- Oatmeal
- Fruit Juices
- Ensure®/Boost®

For the first week, avoid foods that are crunchy, hard, sticky, or spicy.

- Popcorn
- Nuts
- Peanut Butter
- Candy
- Bread/Pastries
- Dried Fruit
- Chips
- Crackers
- Gum
- Seeds

No smoking, drinking carbonated beverages, using mouthwash, or sucking through straws for the first full week. These are the main causes of dry socket.

If you were given a curved tip syringe, wait 7 days then use the syringe to irrigate surgical area(s). Use 2–3 times a day until otherwise instructed.

If you had one or more teeth surgically removed from your jaws, then this may have involved making a surgical incision and possibly the removal of surrounding bone. As a result, you can expect some soreness for several days (5–7), some swelling, a small amount of bleeding, mild fever (below 100° F), and weakness. These are normal findings. If you have been sedated or taking narcotic pain meds, **do not drive, operate machinery, climb stairs (unless assisted), or stay alone with children for 24 hours.**

### CARE DURING THE FIRST 48 HOURS

#### Oral Care

- Moist gauze packs will be placed inside your mouth to control bleeding from the surgical sites. Place moderate pressure (bite down) on the gauze packs for 2 hours by clenching your teeth together. Do not change the packs before the initial 2 hours, as the packs are used to apply pressure not to absorb blood. After the initial 2 hours, you may remove the gauze and place new gauze over the surgical site for another 2 hours. If a moderate amount of bleeding persists, then soak a tea bag for 3 minutes, blot it and bite on it with gauze for 1 hour or until the bleeding stops. It is common to have minor oozing of blood mixed with saliva for 12–24 hours after surgery.
- To avoid dislodging the blood clot (blood is the basis of healing the tooth socket at the extraction site), please heed the following advice during the first 48 hours:
  - No aggressive oral rinsing or tooth brushing
  - No spitting
  - No drinking through a straw
  - No smoking (absolutely for the first 3 days, preferably 4–6)
- You may gently brush your teeth and very, very gently rinse your mouth with warm salt water in the evening before bedtime on the first day postoperatively.

## Post-Operative Instructions: General (Cont.)

### Facial Care

- Apply ice packs (bags of frozen peas work great) to the sides of the face and ensure the pack is enclosed in a towel or similar covering to avoid freezing the skin. Apply packs for 20 minutes, then remove for 20 minutes.
- Apply Vaseline® or lip balm to the lips to keep these areas moist and comfortable.

### Total Body Care

- Maintain head elevation with 2–3 pillows to reduce the blood pressure in your head. This will help minimize discomfort and swelling.
- Get plenty of rest but walk 5–10 minutes every 2 hours while awake. Avoid strenuous activity (weights, running, etc.).
- Eat and drink at your normal times. It is important to consume water or juices and nourishment (soft, no-chew diet) to assist in a normal recovery without complications. **Do not become dehydrated.**
- Take Advil®, ibuprofen, or Motrin®: 800 mg every 8 hours for the next 4–5 days. Day 3 may be the most uncomfortable day; this is normal. You may even see more swelling on day 3. Take the ibuprofen; 800 mg every 8 hours will minimize discomfort.
- As the local anesthetic begins to wear off (2–8 hours), you can expect some discomfort. To minimize the discomfort, take the prescribed pain medication when you arrive home, only if you have had local anesthesia. For patients that have been sedated, you must wait 6–8 hours for sedation medications to wear off, and then you may take the prescribed narcotic. This will allow time for the medication to become effective before the local anesthetic completely wears off. **Do not drive while taking narcotics.**

## CARE AFTER THE INITIAL 48 HOURS

### Oral Care

- Begin rinsing your mouth with warm salt water (a ½ teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces glass of warm water) after each meal. Expect a bad taste and don't swallow the salt water.
- Brush your teeth gently. If sutures are present, keep them as clean as possible. The sutures will usually fall out 7–10 days after surgery. Do not use commercial mouth rinses (Listerine®, Scope®, etc.), as these can delay healing.
- Do not consume carbonated or alcoholic beverages for 7 days.

### Facial Care

- Discontinue the ice packs 48 hours after surgery. Do not be alarmed at the continued slow increase in facial swelling/bruising for the first 48–72 hours after surgery. **This is normal, so relax.**
- Take the narcotic pain medication (Oxycodone, Hydrocodone) only in real discomfort. Ibuprofen (Motrin®) and Tylenol® are typically sufficient and non-sedating. A narcotic pain medication may be needed at bedtime for a good night's sleep. Be sure to eat a snack before taking any pain medication to prevent an upset stomach or nausea.
- Advance your diet to soft foods then to regular meals as soon as you feel comfortable (unless otherwise instructed). You must exercise your jaw muscles (opening and closing) to regain your original mouth opening ability.

**If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office at (903) 534-1414.**