



Post-Operative Instructions: Impacted Tooth Exposure

The following will cover important post-operative information for adherence after the exposure of an impacted tooth. If you are undergoing this procedure, it is important to follow these instructions exactly to ensure optimal healing and quick recovery.

After your surgery, do not disturb the wound or the packing that is placed inside in your mouth. This packing is in place to keep the tooth exposed; however, do not be alarmed if this packing falls out or moves from its original positioning. If your surgeon has attached a small gold chain to the impacted tooth, it is essential that your orthodontist activates the chain as soon as possible following your surgery. If this chain becomes dislodged from the tooth, please contact our office immediately to have the chain replaced.

A small amount of bleeding is common for up to 24 hours. If you experience excessive bleeding (where your mouth fills up rapidly with blood), place a gauze pad directly over the extraction site and hold it in place with firm biting pressure for around 30 minutes or until the bleeding can be controlled. If your bleeding does not slow, please call our office.

Swelling is normal after surgery and is a major cause of post-extraction discomfort. Swelling can be reduced by applying an ice pack to the side of your face for 10 minutes; transfer it to the opposite side for another 10 minutes. Continue icing the face as much as possible for the first 36 hours. Do not freeze the skin. These measures will not eliminate swelling, but they will help to reduce its severity.

It is important to drink fluids after your surgery. Start with clear liquids, such as apple juice, tea, or broth. Always cool down any hot foods or liquids during the first 24 hours. You should eat only soft foods on the day of your surgery — for example, soups, eggs, and mashed potatoes. Gradually build your appetite back up to normal eating habits as soon as possible unless otherwise directed.

Discomfort is normal after any surgery. If you are not allergic or intolerant to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, start taking ibuprofen (also known as Advil® or Motrin®) or Tylenol® as soon as you feel the local anesthetic wearing off. If you are asthmatic, do not take ibuprofen unless you have tolerated it in the past. If ibuprofen alone doesn't control your pain, take your prescribed narcotic in addition. Ibuprofen and your prescribed narcotic can be taken together. Be certain to take your pain medicines with food; this will help prevent nausea. Remember, narcotic pain medicine will impair your judgment and reflexes.

Begin brushing your teeth and cleaning your mouth the day 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. Begin saltwater rinses the day after surgery and continue until the surgical site heals. Rinse with warm salt water 6 times daily. To make the saltwater solution, dissolve a ½ teaspoon of salt in a small glass of warm tap water.