

Integrative Centre - Dental & Natural Health

Post-Op Instructions – Wisdom Teeth Removal and Home care

Removal of wisdom teeth is a serious surgical procedure. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

Immediately Following Surgery:

The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be held in place with firm biting pressure for a half hour. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded. This may be repeated several times until the bleeding is substantially reduced.

Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.

Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as you begin to feel discomfort-this will usually coincide with the local anesthetic becoming diminished.

Restrict your activities the day of surgery and slowly resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.

Place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for explanation.

Bleeding

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery.

Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and **biting firmly for thirty minutes**. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, call for further instructions.

Swelling

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling can be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Two baggies filled with ice, or ice packs should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left on continuously while you are awake. After 36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery. Thirty-six hours following surgery the application of moist heat to the sides of the face is beneficial in reducing the size of the swelling.

Pain

For moderate pain, Two 200 mg tablets of Ibuprofen, (Nurofen) may be taken every 4 hours with something to eat, as needed. For patients who are allergic to Aspirin, or cannot

take Ibuprofen, one or two tablets of regular or Panadeine may be taken every four to six hours instead.

For severe pain take the tablets prescribed for pain as directed. The prescribed pain medicine may make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around heavy machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day. If pain persists or worsens after the third post-operative day, it may require attention and you should call the office.

Diet

After general anesthetic or I.V. sedation, liquids should be taken at first. Do not use straws. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. Drink from a glass. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. Nourishment should be taken regularly. High calorie, high protein intake is very important during the healing phase. Refer to the section on suggested dietary instructions at the end of this brochure. Your solid food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. At least 5-6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat.

Caution: If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy. Therefore, immediately following surgery, if you are laying down, make sure you sit for one minute or so before standing.

Keep your mouth clean

No rinsing of any kind should be done until the day following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse gently. The day after surgery you should begin gentle rinsing at least 5-6 times a day, especially after eating, with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt.

Discoloration

In some cases, discoloration of the skin (Bruising) may occur. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post-operatively. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

Antibiotics

If you have been placed on antibiotics take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. Call the office if you have any questions.

Nausea and Vomiting

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on small amounts of cola, tea or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin taking solid foods slowly, and the prescribed medicine. Smaller amounts of the pain medication (i.e. 1/2 of a tablet) taken more frequently with foods helps reduce the incidence of nausea. The pills can be readily broken or carefully cut with a sharp knife.

Other Complications

If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue

is numb you could bite it and not feel it so be careful. Call Dr Imbeau if you have any questions about this.

Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.

You should be careful going from a lying down position to standing. As you were not able to eat or drink prior to surgery, and taking pain medications can make you dizzy. You could get light headed when you stand up suddenly. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute then get up.

Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots, they are the bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed by your Doctor.

If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as vaseline.

Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.

Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

Finally

Sutures are placed the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged; this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. The sutures will either be self dissolving or removed approximately one week after surgery. The removal of sutures requires no anesthesia or needles. It takes only a minute or so, and there is no discomfort associated with this procedure. So it's really nothing to worry about.

The pain and swelling should subside more and more each day following surgery. If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur call our office for instructions.

There will be a cavity or depression where the tooth was removed. The cavity will gradually, over the next month, fill in with tissue. In the mean time, the area should be kept clean especially after meals with salt water rinses.

Every surgical case is individual, no two mouths are alike. Do not take seriously well intended advice from friends. Discuss your problem with the person best able to effectively help you: Your Doctor.

Brushing your teeth is okay just be gentle and stay one tooth away from the surgical sites.

Dry Socket

A dry socket is caused when the blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of pain at the surgical site radiating to the ear may occur 2-3 days following surgery. There is a very low incidence of dry socket in our office, but it can occur. Please call the office if you are concerned.

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