

Instructions for After Surgery

- **Bleeding** – You should moisten the gauze, set it directly over the site, and leave it in for **1 full hour** at a time. Replace the gauze with a new gauze every hour. Once the gauze is just pink you may leave it out. If the bleeding persists or seems excessive, you may moisten tea bags (any type of tea) and place directly over the area and cover with a gauze pad. Do not sit over a sink and spit continuously because this will result in more bleeding. Bleeding after tooth extraction can exist for a few hours. You may even notice some blood in your saliva the following day, so do not be alarmed. If you are having difficulty controlling the bleeding or become concerned, please contact us.
- **Food** – You can eat right away even if your mouth is numb. You want to start by sipping clear liquids first. If you tolerate this, then you may advance your diet to soft foods that are easy to chew like mashed potatoes, pastas, soups, etc. Initially when you are numb you want to be careful with temperatures of the foods, so you do not burn yourself. Please avoid foods that can get stuck in the sockets like foods with seeds, nuts, and popcorn (berry seeds are acceptable). Also, avoid using a straw for the next week, so you do not dislodge the clot.
- **Medications** – The numbness can last 2 – 8 hours depending on the anesthetic used. Your goal is to eat and get the pain medication on board before the numbness diminishes because this is generally the hardest point to get through. A common side-effect of pain medication is nausea. Taking food before pain medications can help prevent this.
- **Swelling** – To help prevent swelling apply an ice pack to the surgical area periodically for the first **48 hours**. For the first 2 days sleep with your head elevated in a recliner or with a couple extra pillows to prevent further swelling. After the first 2 days, you may apply heat to the area to break up any bruising. Peak swelling is expected around post-operative day three.
- **Dry Socket** – Dry socket usually only occurs on the lower jaw and does not occur till about the third day after surgery. The hallmark of dry socket pain is that it is usually not alleviated by pain medications. If you are 3 days after surgery, and the pain is intensifying and becoming difficult to control, please call us so that we can alleviate your pain with a medicated dressing. You can prevent dry sockets by not smoking, avoiding use of straws with thick liquids, and keeping your mouth clean with saltwater rinses.
- **Hygiene** – After the bleeding has stopped, you should start saltwater rinses after you have anything to eat or drink other than water. The saltwater rinse should be composed of 8 oz of warm water with one teaspoon of salt. You can brush your teeth normally just being careful next to the extraction sites.
- **Activity** – For the first 2-3 days following surgery you should stay home and rest. You want to avoid any heavy physical activity or exercise for 5 days following the surgery.
- **Common mistakes often made:**
 - **Changing the gauze too soon or too frequently resulting in excessive bleeding**
 - **Waiting to take pain medications until you are in pain resulting in poor pain control**
 - **Inadequate food intake before taking pain medications resulting in nausea**
 - **Not rinsing with salt water after meals resulting in food impaction and pain**
 - **Physical activity too soon resulting in dry socket and increased soreness**

Contact the office with any questions.

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