

DIET: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Start with liquids or pureed foods (soup, pudding, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) and return to your regular diet as tolerated. It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Avoid very hot food. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery.

PAIN: Take pain medicine as prescribed. Take the first dose when you get home so it begins to work before anesthetic has worn off. Taking pain medicine with food often helps minimize nausea. If you are taking large quantities of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, please call for a refill during weekday business hours.

SWELLING: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off on the day of surgery. Swelling generally peaks the second and third days after surgery and tapers off over the course of the week.

BLEEDING: Bite firmly on gauze placed over the surgical area, making sure it remains in place. Change the gauze when it becomes saturated and “squishy.” The packs may be removed after one hour. If bleeding persists, apply firm pressure with new gauze over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning. Bleeding may last for several hours, notably with upper wisdom teeth extractions. Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means the gauze is clenched between teeth only and is not exerting pressure on the surgical area. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may **substitute a black tea bag** (soaked in cool water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a gauze) for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

MOUTH RINSES: Do not rinse the day of surgery. Starting on the day after surgery, use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in a glass of warm water and gently rinse. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two times daily.

BRUSHING: Begin your regular oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit normal brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

SMOKING: Do not smoke for at least 48 hours. Smoking is very detrimental to healing and may cause a dry socket.

NAUSEA: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery and general anesthesia. If you experience nausea with pain medicine please discontinue that medicine and call us for an alternative. Nausea after general anesthesia is self-limiting and best managed by slowly advancing your diet. Start with clear liquids. If tolerated you may transition to soft food, then a regular diet.

HOT APPLICATIONS: Starting the day after surgery, you may apply warm compresses to the skin over swollen areas (hot moist towels) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. This will help decrease swelling and muscle stiffness.

HEALING: Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, do not use it for the first 4 days. Then use it daily according to the instructions until the socket has closed completely.

Please call our office anytime at (562) 598-4683. If calling after hours, our answering service will connect you to the doctor on call.