

Emergency: 920.499.0471 (24 hour)

## CARE FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY PROCEDURES

**Bleeding:** Bleeding does occur following extractions, and it can last up to 24 hours. The heaviest bleeding occurs during the first 2-3 hours. Bleeding differs from patient to patient; you may only need gauze for an hour following surgery, or you may need it for 4-5 hours following surgery.

To protect the blood clot, maintain firm pressure by biting on the gauze that has been placed over the surgical area(s). Remove and replace the gauze every 45 minutes to an hour until gauze is light pink in color or bleeding has ceased. Once this happens it is okay to leave the gauze out. Do not go to bed with the gauze in your mouth, and do not use after the day of surgery. You may see a pinkish tint in the saliva over the next few days, and this is normal. If bleeding is heavy, a tea bag can be moistened and wrapped in a piece of gauze. Keep firm pressure for another 45 minutes to an hour. If still actively bleeding after using a tea bag, please contact our office.

**Pain Management:** Most routine extractions do not cause much discomfort after the procedure. Over-the-counter medication should relieve your discomfort (unless you have been instructed by your physician not to use them). Taking Ibuprofen (i.e. Advil, Motrin) 600 mg every 6-8 hours will usually provide sufficient pain and swelling relief. Another good pain reliever is Acetaminophen (Tylenol).

If you are given a prescription for pain, please take as directed (if needed). You may supplement with Ibuprofen (ex. ½ tab prescription pain reliever and 3 hours later 600 mg of IBU/Motrin/Advil) to help you stay ahead of the pain.

- ▲ Pain is expected after surgery but should be managed with pain medication, and if it is not, please contact our office at 920-499-0471.
- ▲ If an antibiotic was given, please take as directed. Because antibiotics taken orally can reduce levels of beneficial bacteria, you may want to take yogurt or acidophilus tablets.

**Swelling:** Keep your head elevated over the next few days to help minimize swelling. Lying flat can cause more swelling. Expect swelling and discomfort to peak 48 hours after surgery.

- ▲ Ice packs or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a towel should be placed on the outside of the cheeks for intervals of 20 minutes on and 10 minutes off. Cold should be used for the first 48 hours.
- ▲ Switch to warm, moist heat after 48 hours with the same intervals of 20 minutes on and 10 minutes off (ex. wet washcloth in microwave).

**Diet:** Adequate food and fluid intake following surgery is important. Please eat whatever is comfortable to you; however you may find that softer foods are easier (e.g., Jell-O, pudding, applesauce, ice cream, yogurt, cottage cheese, mashed potatoes, noodles, etc.).

If you are required to be on a no-chew diet, you would have been given instructions by your Doctor or his assistant.

**Oral Hygiene:** Do not rinse or spit the day of surgery. You can brush the day of surgery with a wet toothbrush, no toothpaste. Brush as normal the next day. Be gentle in the extraction sites as they may be tender for a few days following surgery. Brush as well as you can and rinse with salt water to aid in healing (1/2 teaspoon table salt in 8 oz warm water) 2-3 times per day. The use of commercial mouth wash is not recommended during the healing period. A clean mouth heals faster.

Syringe: A syringe, if provided, should not be used until 1 week after surgery. Use it to flush out the extraction site(s) as often as needed.

Dry Sockets: A dry socket (alveolar osteitis) is a painful dental condition that can occur after extraction of a permanent adult tooth. It can occur when the blood clot at the site of the tooth extraction has been dislodged or has dissolved before the wound has healed. Exposure of the underlying bone and nerves due to a dry socket results in severe pain.

Symptoms of a dry socket are: Pain that radiates from the socket to your ear, eye, temple or neck on the same side of your face as the extraction. Your pain medication may not be as effective. If this were to occur it is usually 3-5 days after surgery. To help minimize the potential for a dry socket:

- ▲ Do not use a straw for one week following surgery
- ▲ Do not spit or smoke for at least 3-5 days following surgery

Sutures: If used, sutures will dissolve on their own usually within 2 days, but can last up to 4 weeks.

Bone Chips: During healing you may notice small bone fragments working their way through the gums. This is common and they will either fall out on their own, or if they are bothersome, we can remove them.

## CARING FOR INFECTIONS FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY

Due to the enormous amount of bacteria or germs in the oral cavity, infections do sometimes occur following oral surgery. They usually can be treated simply and rarely reoccur. To avoid further complications or problems, it is imperative that you follow these instructions.

1. Take the antibiotic pills as directed and do not discontinue them until finished with the entire prescription or until the doctor tells you to do so.
2. Applying moist heat over the swollen area is usually beneficial.
3. Hourly warm salt water rinses are very helpful. Do not disturb your sleep to do this.
4. Once treatment is started, you should see a decrease in the swelling and pain within 48-72 hours.
5. If the swelling severely limits your ability to open your mouth or causes difficulty with swallowing or breathing, call our office immediately and/or go to the emergency room at the nearest hospital.
6. It is imperative that you keep follow-up appointments, and report any significant changes in the pattern of swelling or pain immediately.
7. It is not unusual to run a low-grade temperature. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids. Call our office if your temperature exceeds 100 degrees orally.
8. It is important to understand that failure to follow any of the instructions as indicated above may result in serious complications, significant detriment to your health, and in some cases may be life threatening. Your doctor is available to answer any questions concerning your surgery.