

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

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You should limit your activities as much as possible on the day of the surgery. This will reduce bleeding and permit formation of a clot in the wound, which is necessary for healing. Since you have just had a surgical procedure, you may experience discomfort in the ears, under the jaw, the throat, or the side of the head for up to a week. Typically, surgical wounds of the mouth heal quickly and without complications if you take simple precautions.

SWELLING

Some swelling should be expected and is not a cause for concern. Swelling will vary depending on the difficulty of the surgery. Apply an ice bag to the face for the first 8-10 hours to minimize swelling. The swelling should start to subside after the 3rd postoperative day. If you continue to have severe, hard swelling, please contact us immediately. After hours, please call your local health care provider, urgent care, or hospital emergency room.

BLEEDING

After the surgery, gauze will be placed over the surgical site; you will need to close your jaw tightly over the gauze for 20 minutes. This will help stop the bleeding and keep saliva away from the site. After 20 minutes, discard the gauze and replace with new gauze until bleeding has stopped. It is normal for the saliva to be streaked with blood for about a day. If there is more than just oozing, the following procedures will help control it:

- Use clean gauze to gently remove the blood from the mouth and surgical wounds. All blood clots that are not actually in the wounds should be removed by rinsing with cold water.
- Place clean, rolled-up gauze over the bleeding spot.
- Close the teeth tightly over the gauze so there is pressure against the site. Make sure the gauze is placed directly over the site of surgery and not in between your teeth.
- Maintain this pressure for about 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary.
- Avoid continuous spitting since this will cause the bleeding to start again.
- One drop of blood in 20 drops of saliva looks like a lot of blood, but it is mostly saliva.

If the above fails to stop clotting, use the provided teabag saturated with warm water. Use this the same way you have been instructed with the gauze. It will also help stop bleeding if you lie down with your head elevated on several pillows and place cold towels or an ice bag to your face. Do not drink coffee, tea or take other stimulants. Keep your fingers and tongue away from the area. If none of the above works, please call for further instructions, or after hours, please call your local health care provider.

DIET

Avoid chewing food or gum until the numbness wears off. You may eat soft, nutritious food such as soft-boiled eggs and soup. Solid food should be added as soon as you can chew comfortably. To help the healing process, you should try to keep your diet as close to normal as possible. Eat as often as you can the first few days and DO NOT drink through straws since this may cause bleeding or affect healing. Be sure to take multiple vitamins to help the healing process.

ORAL HYGIENE

It is very important to start thorough oral care on the day following surgery. Rinse your mouth vigorously with warm salt water (one-half teaspoon of salt to one glass of water) at least six times a day. Clean all remaining teeth with a soft toothbrush as usual. You are less likely to get a post-operative infection if your mouth and teeth are clean. If you have had an upper back tooth extraction, it is very important that you sneeze with your mouth open and not blow your nose for at least a month, or problems with your sinus can occur.

SMOKING

Minimal smoking is permitted for at least three days. Smoking delays healing, causes bleeding to start again, and loss of blood clot which leads to a dry socket.

DRY SOCKET

A dry socket occurs when the tooth socket fails to start healing with a blood clot or the clot disintegrates leaving an area unprotected.

If a dry socket occurs, symptoms usually start 2-3 days after the surgery. Symptoms include a severe ear ache type pain. If this occurs, call our office immediately. A dressing will then be applied in the area, which will give comfort and protection while secondary healing occurs. Healing takes approximately 5-15 days, during which time you may need to have the socket repacked. This is usually a short appointment and is done at no charge. Carefully following the enclosed post-operative instructions will minimize the chances for a dry socket to occur.

PAIN

You may be advised to take acetaminophen which should take care of most of the pain you experience. For more severe pain, a stronger pain medication may be prescribed. Do not take any other pain medications unless you have been specifically directed to do so. Do not drink any alcoholic beverages while taking medication for pain. Since many of these prescription drugs can cause drowsiness, do not take them if you are driving a car, operating machinery, or doing anything requiring complete alertness. If any of the following occur: a rash or a fever over 101 degrees develop orally; have difficulty breathing, severe vomiting, any other reaction, or your pain does not subside after taking medication as prescribed, please contact us immediately! After hours, please call your local health care provider.

ANTIBIOTICS

When antibiotics are prescribed for you, they must be taken as directed. Take the entire amount of medicine as prescribed. If you break out in a rash, stop taking the medicine and call your dentist and/or physician. You may need medication for the allergy.

SUTURES

Sutures (stitches) may have been placed in your mouth and may absorb on their own. If you need an appointment to have them removed, Dr. Hanson will inform you.

IMPACTED OR UNERUPTED TEETH

The removal of impacted teeth is quite different from the removal of erupted teeth. Your post-operative care will be the same; however, the following conditions may occur and are not considered unusual:

- The operated side may swell considerably and you may have an earache or sore throat.
- Trismus (tightness of the jaw muscles) may occur causing you difficulty opening your mouth. This occurs because these muscles attach to the jaw in the area of the impacted teeth.
- You may feel numbness or tingling of the lip or tongue on the operated side. This condition is rarely permanent, but it may persist for several weeks or months.
- Adjoining teeth may ache and be sensitive temporarily.
- There may be an opening where the tooth was removed. The opening will gradually fill in with new tissue.
- There may be slight fever for 24-48 hours. If fever persists call our office.

If you have any questions or concerns please call us, or after hours please call your local health care provider, urgent care, or the emergency room at the hospital.