



POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXTRACTION OF TEETH

Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office at **(703) 653-0989**.

FIRST HOUR

- **PAIN MEDICATION** – If instructed by your surgeon, you should take Motrin 600mg every 6 hours continuously for the first three days. Take the first dose immediately and before the local anesthesia has worn off. You may use the narcotic pain medication in addition to the Motrin, alternate the narcotic and the Motrin medications every three hours as needed.
- **GAUZE PRESSURE** – Bite down firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, make sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first 30 minutes unless the bleeding is heavy. After 30 minutes, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 20 to 30 minutes). It is best to slightly moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning and to avoid from having the gauze attach to the sutures. Bleeding from oral surgery may take 24 hours to fully stop. Read below.
- **PROTECTING THE GRAFTING SITE** – Do not rinse, smoke, or drink with a straw for at least 24 hours after your surgery. If you have been prescribed an antibiotic mouthwash, you may begin to use it gently at bedtime the night of your surgery if you wish.
- **ICE PACKS** – Swelling is common following oral surgery. Swelling can be minimized by using cold packs, or a bag of frozen peas applied firmly to the cheek nearest to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery.

**The chemicals in cigarettes are caustic and will significantly delay healing, increase post-operative pain, swelling, risk of infection, and dry socket.*

AFTER THE FIRST HOUR

- **PERSISTENT BLEEDING** – Mild bleeding or oozing is normal during the first 24 hours. If necessary, reposition the gauze packs directly over the surgical site. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may substitute a tea bag (soaked in warm water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20-30 minutes. The tea contains a beneficial chemical that helps to clot the blood. If bleeding remains uncontrolled after a full hour of using the tea bags, call our office. Remove the gauze while you eat and sleep. Place an old towel over your pillow, as one drop of blood will turn a mouth full of saliva red. It is completely normal to experience mild oozing of blood from the surgical area for a full 24 hours. Once the bleeding has stopped you do not have to use anymore gauze.



- **BONE GRAFT AND COLLAGEN MEMBRANE** – During the first week after your procedure, you may notice that a small grainy material has fallen from the grafting site. Your surgeon overpacks the area with grafting material, with the knowledge that some grafting material will be lost during the natural healing process. You may also notice a white collagen membrane that resembles the end of a cotton swab tip falling out of the graft site, this is normal. This membrane serves as a barrier between the closing of your gum tissue, and the grafting material. The membrane is either absorbed by the body or is released and will naturally fall out.
- **MOUTH OPENING EXERCISES** – Jaw stiffness is common following oral surgery. You can reduce this stiffness by stretching you mouth open with two fingers each hour and applying warm compress to the outside of your jaw.
- **MANAGING POST-OPERATIVE PAIN** – Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort and you may be given a prescription for pain medication. If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. Calls for renewing narcotic (pain killer) prescriptions must be made during our regular office hours as pharmacy's do not accept over-the-phone narcotic refills.

POST-OP DAY #2 AND BEYOND

- **ORAL HYGIENE** – Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. In addition to any prescription mouth washes you may have been given, use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 oz glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but after every meal is encouraged. Avoid commercial mouthwashes, the alcohol they contain may irritate the surgical site. Avoid brushing the surgical area for at least one week. However, we do encourage you to brush and floss all other areas.
- **HEALING** – Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first three days after the surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the 4th day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a normal diet excluding crunchy foods for at least 1 week. The remainder of the post-operative course should be a gradual, steady, improvement.
- **SHARP EDGES/SUTURES** – If you feel something hard or sharp edges around the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls, which once supported the extracted teeth or the ends of the sutures. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following weeks. This is normal but if they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office. Dissolvable stitches begin to melt away as you heal, loose ends may be cut short with a clean sharp scissors or be gently pulled.