



380 Family Dentistry

Post-Operative Instructions Following Dental Surgery

THINGS TO EXPECT:

- Bleeding: Bleeding or "oozing" for the first 12 to 24 hours.
- Swelling This is normal following a surgical procedure in the mouth. It should reach its maximum in 3-4 days.
- Discomfort. The most discomfort that you may experience may occur for a few hours after the sensation returns to your mouth. It may gradually increase again for 3-4 days, then begin to diminish over the next few days.

THINGS TO DO IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY:

- Bleeding: Place moist gauze over extraction sites and maintain pressure by biting for at least one hour. Repeat as needed.
Keep head elevated, and rest. Do not suck or spit excessively.
NOTE: Some "oozing" and discoloration of saliva is normal. If bleeding persists, replace the gauze with a clean folded gauze placed over the extraction site, and maintain pressure until the bleeding stops. A teabag will work as well.
- Ice-Packs: Place ice or cold compresses on the region of surgery for 15 minutes every half-hour for the first 12 to 24 hours.
- Smoking: Avoid smoking during the healing period.
- Discomfort Take medications as directed for **PAIN**. Mild-to-moderate pain can be relieved by non-prescription Ibuprofen or Tylenol. For more severe pain, take the prescription pain medication as directed. If you are using any of these medications for the first time, exercise caution with the initial doses.
- Diet. A nutritious liquid or soft diet will be necessary for the first week after surgery. Healing will occur in weekly increments; therefore, it is best to **gradually** return the diet and/or other activities back to normal.
- Activity: For the first 24 to 48 hours, one should **REST**. Patients who have sedation should refrain from driving an automobile or from engaging in any task that requires alertness for the next 24 hours.
- Avoid: **The most important things to avoid are smoking, alcohol, straws, and carbonated drinks during healing.**

THE DAYS AFTER SURGERY:

1. Brush teeth carefully.
2. Beginning 24 hours after surgery, rinse mouth with warm salt water (or prescription mouth rinse). Continue rinsing three-to-five times per day for seven days, then begin irrigating per dentist's instructions (see #7 below).
3. If **ANTIBIOTICS** are prescribed, be **SURE** to take **ALL** that have been prescribed, **AS DIRECTED**.
4. Use **WARM, MOIST HEAT** on face for swelling, if any. Continue until the swelling subsides. A warm, wet washcloth or heating pad will suffice.
5. If **SUTURES** were used, they will dissolve on their own.
6. **DRY SOCKET** is a delayed healing response, which may occur during the second to fourth post-operative day. It is associated with a throbbing pain on the side of the face, which may seem to be directed up toward the ear. In mild cases, simply increasing the pain medication can control the symptoms. If this is unsuccessful, please call Dr. Campbell.
7. **RETURN TO THE OFFICE five-to-seven days after the surgery for irrigation instructions.**

CONTACT THE DOCTOR IF:

1. Bleeding is excessive and cannot be controlled.
2. Discomfort is poorly controlled.
3. Swelling is excessive, spreading, or continuing to enlarge after 60 hours.
4. Allergic reactions to medications occur, which are causing a generalized rash or excessive itching.