



Post-Operative Instructions for Oral Surgery

Bleeding

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following oral surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon.

Continuously bite on **damp** gauze for 45 minutes, then change the gauze and bite for another 45 minutes. Use 2 or 3 gauze squares, fold them in half and roll them up tightly before biting down. When you bite together, your other teeth should not touch at first. We will give you a supply of gauze when you leave; this should last for several gauze changes.

Do not remove gauze to check for bleeding as it may dislodge the preliminary clots and lead to more bleeding. Repeat gauze replacement at 45-minute intervals if necessary.

- If you have good firm pressure the bleeding should stop within several hours.
- If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened black tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels.
- Try to keep the tongue away from the surgical site.
- To minimize further bleeding, try to minimize physical activity for several days.
- **If bleeding does not subside, call us at 507-345-7786 for further instructions.**

Pain Management:

- For mild discomfort take over-the-counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen every 3-4 hours.
- **You can combine 600 mg Ibuprofen and 500 mg Tylenol and take them every 6 hours.**
 - This would be 3 tablets of 200 mg Ibuprofen and 1 tablet of Extra-Strength Tylenol.
- Some patients cannot take Ibuprofen due to other health conditions; in this case it is generally recommended to take Tylenol for pain; consult your physician if needed.
- Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day.

Antibiotics

If you were given an antibiotic please take it as directed and finish unless instructed to do so by your doctor; this will be roughly 7 days in most cases.

Sutures

Many extractions do not require sutures. In most cases that require sutures, we use self-dissolving sutures that will not require removal. These will usually start to come loose or fall out after about 5 days. Avoid pulling on them and let them fall out on their own. In some cases, we use sutures that

need removal after 2-3 weeks; we will advise you of this and schedule this post-operative appointment before you leave.

Swelling

Swelling of the face following oral surgery is normal. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event that will resolve in time. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs.

- You can apply ice 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for 24-48 hours following your surgery.
- Ice should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed.
- After 48 hours, you should discontinue the ice and begin warm packs.
- Elevating your head while sleeping for the first 48 hours can also help minimize swelling.
- Swelling will usually reach its peak on the 3rd or 4th day.

Oral Hygiene

- **No rinsing of any kind should be performed until the day following surgery.**
- **Starting 24 hours after surgery**, gently rinse mouth with a solution of one-half teaspoon of salt dissolved in a glass of 4 ounces of warm water at least 5-6 times a day, (morning, after each meal, and before bed) for 2 weeks. You can also make up a bottle of saltwater to carry with you.
- You may also resume regular tooth brushing, but avoid disturbing the surgical site. You may brush all of your teeth with the exception of the implant or bone graft sites starting the day after your surgery.

Diet

- **No straws or spitting for 1 week. Avoid tobacco use for 1 week if at all possible. No abrasive foods such as chips, popcorn, seeds, and nuts for 1 week. Minimize alcohol use for the first few days.**
- For the first 6 hours or until the numbness wears off, eat soft foods such as a milkshake, smoothie, yogurt, ice cream, pudding, applesauce, mashed potatoes, or creamy soup. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important.
- After the first 6 hours or when the numbness wears off, eat soft foods such as pasta, macaroni, and cheese, pancakes, eggs, or cooked vegetables.
- You should prevent dehydration by taking fluids regularly. Your food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort, and heal faster if you continue to eat.