



## Post-Operative Instructions

### After Extraction

After extraction of teeth, a blood clot forms in the remaining socket. To prevent postoperative inflammation and infection, it is important to keep this blood clot in place.

### For the First 48 Hours After Extraction

- DO NOT vigorously rinse your mouth as this may rinse away the blood clot.
- DO NOT use drinking straws.
- DO NOT smoke.
- DO NOT disturb the extraction site with tongue or fingers.

### Bleeding

After tooth removal, it is normal to ooze blood from the tooth socket for approximately 24 hours. To minimize bleeding, do the following:

- Bite on damp gauze for 1 hour after extraction.
- Repeat with fresh gauze every 20 minutes as needed.
- DO NOT lie flat. Elevate your head with a pillow.
- Limit activity for the first 2–3 days.

### Swelling

It is normal to swell after tooth removal. The swelling is greatest 2–3 days after surgery and may remain for an additional 3 days before it starts to resolve.

- Immediately after surgery, place ice packs over the area.
- Leave the pack on for 20 minutes and then off for 20 minutes for the rest of the day.
- After the first 24 hours, it is not necessary to continue cold packs.

### Postoperative Discomfort

After removal of teeth, it is normal to experience some discomfort when anesthesia wears off. Taking prescribed medication as directed should control discomfort, but may not eliminate it.

- DO NOT operate a motor vehicle or machinery while taking pain medication. It can make you drowsy.

### Infection

After surgical procedures, there is always a chance of infection, though this is uncommon. If prescribed antibiotics, take them until finished.

Women taking oral contraceptives should use alternate methods of contraception while taking antibiotics, as penicillin-like medications may decrease effectiveness.

### Sutures

Depending on the procedure, sutures (stitches) may be placed to aid healing. Dissolvable sutures fall out in about 1–7 days. Non-dissolvable sutures are typically removed within 7–10 days, but sometimes up to 3 weeks.

## **Other Instructions**

If you have had IV sedation or general anesthesia, rest at home with moderate activity as tolerated.

For the next 24 hours following anesthesia:

- DO NOT drive a car or operate machinery or power tools.
- DO NOT drink alcoholic beverages.
- DO NOT engage in strenuous physical activity.

## **Monitoring**

It is highly advisable to have someone stay with you for the first few hours after your procedure to monitor your condition, attend to any of your needs, and to help ensure your safety.

## **Brushing**

Begin normal hygiene the night of surgery or the next day, brushing lightly near the surgery site.

- DO NOT spit.

## **Diet Suggestions**

Start with clear liquids (e.g., apple juice, ginger ale), then advance to soft foods like Jell-O®, applesauce, or milkshakes as tolerated.

Soft foods such as mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, or pasta are recommended for one week.

- DO NOT eat popcorn, peanuts, seeds, or chips for at least two weeks.
- DO NOT rinse your mouth for the first 24 hours. After that, rinse gently with warm salt water ( $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt in 8 oz warm water) 2–3 times daily for one week.

Brush gently and avoid the surgical site for the first 24 hours.

## **Warning Signs**

Contact our office immediately if any of the following occur:

- Bleeding that cannot be controlled by firmly biting on gauze for 60 minutes.
- Pain unrelieved by prescribed medication.
- Persistent nausea or vomiting.
- Increasing swelling after 72 hours or swelling that interferes with swallowing.
- Foul-tasting discharge unrelieved by oral hygiene.
- Fever greater than 101°F.

## **Failure to follow instructions may be life-threatening.**

It is our desire that your recovery be smooth and pleasant. Please contact our office with any concerns.