

Post-Operative Instructions: Wisdom Teeth

What to expect after having your wisdom teeth removed...

Recovery Time! Here are a few points to consider for your recovery.

Swelling

- Swelling is normal after surgery. It tends to **peak on the third day after surgery**.
 - Ice to the face or a bag of frozen peas etc to the area is helpful to reduce swelling.
 - Ideally this should be done for 20 mins on and 20 mins off while awake for up to three days after surgery.
- *Depending on what was done, however, the doctor and their team will advise you whether ice is required and how much swelling is anticipated.

Bruising

- Bruising on the face can occur after surgery and can look bluish initially and then yellow. In some cases, it can last for almost 2 weeks.
- Bruising can travel under the skin. Do not be alarmed if your upper tooth was extracted and the bruising reaches the lower jaw area.
- Bruising will all go away in time.

Rinsing

- Rinsing with warm salt water can begin the day after surgery.
 - **Do not rinse or spit on the day of surgery.**
 - If you must brush your teeth that day, avoid spitting afterward. Otherwise, resume brushing your teeth the next day, however, avoid the area of surgery for a week.
 - Rinsing: do this gently so as not to disturb the blood clot.
- o Use 1 cup of water and 1 tbsp of salt. Rinse 3-4x/day each time rinsing 3 times.
- Rinsing for 1 week is adequate.
- *If needed, a syringe will be supplied to flush the sockets out directly, however this is only started 1 week after surgery. Using the syringe for 2 weeks is typically adequate. The doctor and their team will inform you if you need to use a syringe.

Pain

- Pain after surgery is normal.
 - It is **typically worse the first 3 post-operative days**.
- *If you have been instructed to take Extra Strength (ES) Tylenol, you may take 2 at a time (maximum 8 tabs/day). ES Tylenol may be taken at the same time as ibuprofen/motrin/advil if needed.
- The doctor may also prescribe other pain medication depending on the nature of your surgery.
 - Start taking the pain medication before the local anesthesia wears off, typically about an

hour after the procedure.

- It is best to take medications after eating (even a little something) if possible.

*If the pain medication is not relieving your pain, contact the doctor or the office. There is no need to suffer!

Eating/Drinking

- You may drink and eat soft foods after your surgery such as fish, pasta, jello, eggs, smoothies, pudding, juices, soups, mashed potatoes etc.

- Avoid anything hard or crunchy such as nuts, popcorn, crusty breads, crackers, and seeds for 3 weeks.

- Avoid eating/drinking anything too hot, spicy, fizzy (carbonated) for the first few days after surgery.

- Stick to soft foods for 1 week after surgery. After 1 week, you may progress to a normal diet (whatever is comfortable to eat) except for nuts, seeds and popcorn which should be avoided for 3 weeks after surgery.

- **DO NOT USE A STRAW for the first week after surgery.**

Nausea

- Nausea may occur after surgery if you have had sedation or general anesthesia.

- It may also occur with some pain medications.

- Gravol may be helpful to reduce nausea.

Mouth Opening

- It is normal for your mouth opening to be limited after surgery depending on the extractions performed. It can take up to 10-12 days for your mouth opening to return back to normal.

Smoking

- Do not smoke for 1 week after surgery. Smoking after surgery can increase the risk of infection and cause significant pain

Bleeding

- It is normal to have some bleeding after surgery. If this occurs, use gauze to put pressure **DIRECTLY** over the bleeding extraction site.

o Take 2-3 pieces of gauze (on top of one another) and fold it in half, then in a quarter and put it directly over the site (vertically) and bite down.

o Bite down for 15 to 30 minutes without talking.

o Direct pressure over the site is required to stop the bleeding.

*If the gauze (when removed) is red over the site where pressure was applied that is normal.

*If the gauze is soaked with blood, apply a fresh gauze again. A black tea bag soaked in warm water can also be used as an alternative to gauze. Remember, the key is to apply direct pressure to the site for 15 minutes.

*If bleeding is persistent despite proper application of biting pressure, contact the office or your doctor.

- Do not exercise for 3 days after surgery as this will increase your blood pressure and may cause bleeding.

o The doctor might advise to refrain longer from exercise depending on what surgery was performed.

Sutures

- The doctor will inform you if sutures (stitches) were placed. They typically do not have to be removed and will resorb on their own. Sutures are not always required.

Socket Healing

- It will take approximately 4-6 weeks for the gum tissue to fill in the holes (extraction sockets).

- Do not be alarmed if you see “black holes” where the teeth were extracted until the gum fills in. This is normal. The sockets heal from inside toward the outside.

Please Note: In the lower jaw, long-acting local anesthesia is often used. This means that you may feel numbness in you lower lip, chin, gums, and tongue until you go to sleep. If you continue to feel numbness the next morning, contact the office or the doctor.