

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ORAL SURGERY (SURGICAL EXTRACTIONS)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ EVERY WORD!

PAIN CONTROL

Unless we have prescribed or given you something stronger, use Panadol or Herron equivalent. If no strong medication is required, Panadol (or any paracetamol) can be taken. This is considered to be the only safe analgesic for children under twelve and for pregnant or lactating women. Rinsing with SAVACOL is also an excellent pain reliever, but please read on before using this.

Local anesthetic and numbness

The length of time you feel numb varies depending on the type of anaesthetic we have used and the site of the injection. The lower jaw usually stays numb longer than the top jaw. While your mouth is numb be careful not to bite your cheek, lip or tongue. The numbness in the top jaw should subside within a few hours, but it can last up to 5-8 hours on the lower jaw. Occasionally, the actual needle tip itself can cause a slight injury to the tissue or a nerve and cause swelling, limited jaw opening and temporary numbness. Swelling usually gets worse for a day or two, then levels off for a day or two, then gets better. Limited jaw opening feels strange, but don't be concerned, as it always self corrects. It usually lasts for about a week. Temporary numbness can be caused by the needle inadvertently injuring some of the nerve fibres. It is a very rare occurrence and may last a few days or several months. Please call the surgery and advise us if there is any numbness lasting more than a week, so we may refer you for further assessment. Please note that it is *impossible* to avoid occasional inadvertent nerve contact with the needle, since it is the nerve we are trying to get close to.

Healing

The extraction site will gradually fill in with gum over the next few weeks. The bone will usually change shape to smooth over the site, but occasionally a sharp edge of bone may start to work it's way up and project through the gum. Call the surgery if you notice a sharp, hard lump on the gum, after a month or two, and we will correct it. Do not be concerned if the site takes time (3 to 4 months) to fill in after a tooth is taken out.

Bleeding control

We will place a gauze pack over the extraction site which you should bite on to confine the blood and create back pressure while the clotting takes place. **You must have pressure on the rim of the extraction site, sealing at the gum, in order to stop the blood flow. The blood clotting happens a lot faster if you stop the blood flow. The gauze or tissue should be firmly held or clenched in place for 20-30 minutes after you leave our office.** Expect a slight taste of blood. Do not chew on the pack – keep it as still as possible. After approximately 30 minutes, you may take out the pack and discard it. There is no need to replace it unless heavy bleeding occurs – (not to be confused with “ooze” mixed with saliva)

If you are getting true bleeding - mouthfuls of bright red blood - do the following:

1. Fold a piece of clean gauze (or a tissue or handkerchief) into a pad thick enough to bite on so that the other teeth don't quite touch. Place it directly on the extraction site – even if it means squeezing it down between two other teeth.
2. Apply moderate to firm pressure by closing the teeth firmly over this pad. Maintain this pressure for whatever it takes to stop the bleeding - usually about thirty minutes, but several hours may be necessary. If the pad becomes soaked you can replace it with a clean one after 30 minutes, but only if the taste really bothers you.

If heavy bleeding continues, call your dentist – **Remember though, a lot of saliva and a small amount of blood, can look like active bleeding.**

Don't disturb the blood clot

After an extraction, a blood clot forms in the tooth socket. This clot is an important part of the normal healing process. You should therefore avoid activities that might disturb the clot and do not try to spit or rinse out the blood clot.

- Do not smoke, or rinse your mouth **vigorously**, or drink through a straw **for the first 24 hours**. You should rinse with Diffam-C gently to start with. Turbulent rinsing or suction could dislodge the clot, infect the bone and delay healing.
- Do not clean the teeth next to the site, or the healing socket itself, for the rest of the day. You should, however, brush and floss your other teeth. Gently rinse your mouth afterward. (Use SAVACOL or equivalent).
- Do not suck on the extraction site.
- Do not smoke for the first week (perhaps use this time to try and quit)
- No exercise or alcohol for the first 48 hours then minimal exercise and alcohol for a further 5 days.

Stitches

If you had removable stitches placed, please make an appointment to have them removed approximately 7-10 days after surgery.

Rinsing

4 hours or so after the extraction (unless still bleeding), start gently rinsing your mouth with either warm salt water (half a teaspoon of salt in 200ml glass of warm water) or SAVACOL. Remember not to rinse your mouth vigorously because you may disturb the clot.

Food Trapping

Food will inevitably get into the extraction site – Just rinse it out gently in the first 24 hours and don't be concerned if you can't get it all out. After a day you can be a bit more vigorous in your rinsing and you can lightly glide your toothbrush over the top of the extraction site. You can get a disposable plastic syringe to irrigate the extraction site if you have a particular problem.

Swelling and bruising

Swelling usually only happens if your surgery was difficult. You can help reduce swelling and pain by applying cold compresses to the face on and off for several hours after the extraction. Use an ice bag or cold, moist cloth 5 minutes on, 5 minutes off. This must be done in the immediate postoperative period to be beneficial.

“Trismus” (limited ability to open the mouth) is also common in the postoperative period. If you have difficulty brushing, be sure to rinse with a chlorhexidine mouth rinse (DiffamC or Savacol)

If your extraction was very difficult and required extensive oral surgery, or you have very thin and delicate tissue, or you are prone to bruise, you can expect some bruising on the skin adjacent to the wound and sometimes under the eye if it was an upper tooth. This goes away after approximately two weeks.

Antibiotics

You generally don't need antibiotics for most oral surgery, but you may be given them. Do not take Amoxil or Augmentin if you are allergic to penicillin. If Amoxil or Augmentin gives you a skin rash, stop taking it, as you are probably allergic to penicillin, the active ingredient.

Diet

After the extraction, drink lots of liquids and eat soft, nutritious foods. Avoid alcohol and hot drinks on the first day as they can promote bleeding. Begin eating solid foods the next day or as soon as you can chew comfortably. For about two days, try to chew food on the side opposite the extraction site. Vitamins such as B and C may help in the healing process and make you feel better.

Dry Socket IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ THIS:

Sometimes an extraction site may seem to be comfortable for 3-7 days after the extraction, only to then become extremely painful. This is usually accompanied by a bad taste and odour. If you develop these symptoms, it may be a “dry socket” infection. Although painful, it is not a serious problem. You can continue taking pain killers (if needed) and persevere for a further 10-14 days until it gets better (it always gets better on its own, without treatment). Alternatively, you can come into the surgery and get symptomatic relief. We can place medicaments, which, whilst not curing the infection, will take away the pain. This can be useful if the pain is putting you off your work. Expect to be charged a small fee for this, as it is a rare and unpredictable event, not included in the cost of extraction. Antibiotics do **not** generally cause any improvement in dry socket, but may be indicated if you have wider surgical wounds. If you would prefer to take antibiotics, we are happy to oblige, but we do not advocate them, because of the risk of developing resistant bacteria.

Oral Hygiene

It is important to continue to brush and floss your teeth thoroughly at least once a day. The tongue should also be brushed. This will help eliminate the bad breath and unpleasant taste that is common after an extraction.

Please, at any time, feel free to call our office if you have any queries or concerns. We are here to help. 9316 2811