

# Dental Extraction Postoperative Instructions

After dental extraction surgery, following these Dental Extraction Postoperative Instructions can make the experience as pleasant as possible.



## Immediately after Dental Extraction Surgery

It is important for a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. After the blood clot forms, **do not rinse vigorously, suck on straws** or drink alcohol for 72 hours. It is important not to disturb or dislodge the clot as it aids healing. If the bleeding or oozing persists, place another moist gauze pad and bite firmly but gently for another 30 minutes. You may have to do this several times.

### *Pain*

Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. To optimize your comfort, you should take the first pain pill before the numbing medication has worn off. First, take narcotic pain medication then a couple of hours later take Ibuprofen if needed. Alternate prescription medications and **ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin)** as prescribed. Do not take ibuprofen if you are intolerant of this medication. An ice pack or an unopened bag of frozen peas or corn applied to the area will keep pain to a minimum. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not operate a motor vehicle or machinery (lawn mower, etc.) while taking the narcotic pain medication. Notify the clinic if you are experiencing pain that is not improving 3-5 days after surgery.

### *Bleeding*

Some bleeding or redness in the saliva is normal for 36 hours. **Excessive bleeding** can be controlled by biting on a moistened gauze pad placed directly on the bleeding area for 30 minutes. This may be repeated as needed. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, sit upright, and avoid exercise. After the blood clot forms, it is important not to dislodge the clot as it aids healing. If bleeding continues after 3-4 gauze changes, please call for further instructions.

#### **Pacific Oral Surgery**

##### **Ventura Office**

6555 Telephone Road, Suite 1  
Ventura, CA 93003  
**Phone 805-650-1840**  
Fax 805-639-9314

#### **Pacific Oral Surgery**

##### **Thousand Oaks Office**

Los Robles Professional Park  
307 S Moorpark Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91361  
**Phone 805-497-8571**  
Fax 805-497-2781

#### **Pacific Oral Surgery**

##### **Simi Valley Office**

Erringer Professional Building  
1755 Erringer Road, Suite 11  
Simi Valley, CA 93065  
**Phone 805-522-2700**  
Fax 805-522-5026

## *Swelling*

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery. Swelling may not reach its maximum until the third post-operative day. However, swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs and sleeping with the head in an elevated position. Baggies filled with **ice, ice packs**, or an unopened bag of frozen peas or corn should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. After 72 hours, ice may not have a beneficial effect. Do not drink alcoholic beverages. If possible sleep with your head elevated at a 30-degree angle for the first three days following surgery. In general, patients who use ice and sleep with their heads elevated experience less swelling, have less post-operative pain and recover more quickly from surgery.

## *Diet*

Drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious soft food the day of surgery. Avoid hot liquids or hot food for 48 hours. Take only fluids until numbness has completely disappeared. You can eat normally as soon as you are comfortable.

## *Antibiotics*

If antibiotics are prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if signs and symptoms of infection are gone.

## *Nausea and Vomiting*

Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a glass of water. In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not eat anything for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. Sipping on flat coke or ginger ale can reduce nausea. You can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine once nausea subsides.

## *Oral Hygiene*

Keeping your mouth as clean as possible following surgery is essential to good healing and one of the best ways to avoid infection. Begin brushing your remaining teeth the night of surgery, avoiding the surgery site. You can mix **50% hydrogen peroxide and 50% water**, dip a Q-tip in the solution and wipe gently over the surgery site to keep plaque from accumulating on the sutures or teeth surrounding the area. If there is minimal bleeding, saltwater rinses may begin 24 hours after surgery (mix 1 tablespoon of salt with 8 ounces of warm water.) Swish gently and allow the water to drip into the sink. Repeat the process taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Rinses should be done 2-3 times a day, especially after eating.

### *Healing*

The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the postoperative course should be gradual, steady improvement. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a **plastic irrigating syringe**, DO NOT use it for the first five days. Then use it daily according to the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely.

### *Stitches*

You may have some stitches in your mouth. These may require removal at your first follow-up visit. Do not be concerned if you lose a stitch prior to your follow-up appointment.

### *Antibiotics*

If you had an infection or bone graft placed in the tooth extraction site, you may have been prescribed an antibiotic. Be sure to take the prescribed antibiotics as directed to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction and notify our office. You should finish your antibiotic prescription until it is complete. Antibiotics can sometimes cause an upset stomach. If this is the case, it is advisable to take acidophilus or pro-biotic tablets along with your antibiotic.

### *Smoking*

Do not smoke for a minimum of 2 weeks following surgery. The heat and toxic chemicals in cigarette smoke are harmful to the healing of wounds and increases the likelihood of dry socket and infection.

### *Activity*

Keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery. Activities after surgery should be couch or bed rest for the first day. Bending, lifting, or strenuous activity will result in increased bleeding, swelling and pain. You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. You could get light headed when you stand up suddenly. Keep in mind that you are probably not taking normal nourishment. This may weaken you and further limit your strength.

### *Questions/Problems*

Following these **Dental Extraction Postoperative Instructions** will assist you in making your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you have any questions or concerns about your progress, please call our office.