

## Tooth Extraction Postoperative Instructions



### Care of the Surgery Site

Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical sites to limit bleeding. If active bleeding persists after one hour, fold new gauze in a tight roll and place so biting applies pressure directly over the surgical sites for another hour. Alternatively, a moist green-teabag can be used in the area of bleeding by biting down firmly for one hour. Minor bleeding may be present for 24-48 hours. Keep finger and tongue away from the surgical sites if possible. Avoid smoking after surgery to optimize healing and minimize the risk of a dry socket. Sutures placed will dissolve on their own in 5-10 days, but should not be cause for concern if they fall out earlier.

### Pain

Pain management is most effective when pain relievers are taken before local anesthesia wears off. Medications such as ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil), naproxen (Aleve), and aspirin are the most effective over-the-counter pain relievers and anti-inflammatories. These can be combined with acetaminophen (Tylenol) for better pain control. For moderate to severe pain use the prescription given to you and take as directed on the bottle. Do not combine narcotic pain medications with alcohol.

### Swelling

Some swelling should be expected and should not be cause for concern. Apply ice bags to the side of the face for the first 24 hours (20-minutes on and 10-minutes off) to help minimize the amount of swelling. Ice should be discontinued 24 hours after surgery. The greatest swelling will peak 36-72 hours after surgery and then should gradually subside. Anti-inflammatories will also help minimize swelling. Bruising can occur, and will disappear within 10 days.

### Diet

While still numb from anesthetic, avoid chewing as you could bite your lip, cheek, or tongue; and avoid hot temperature as you could burn your mouth. Soft foods, such as yogurt, soups, noodles, and eggs are most desirable for the first 2-3 days after surgery. Avoid such foods as nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn that may become lodged into the surgical site(s). Slowly advance your diet back to normal based on your level of comfort.

### Oral Hygiene

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential to proper healing. You may brush your teeth starting the day *after* surgery, but avoid the surgical site(s) for 7 days after surgery. If you were provided a prescription mouthwash, use as directed. If not, you can use salt water made of ½ teaspoon (a pinch) of salt in 8 ounces of water and gently swish 2-3 times a day.

### Syringe Irrigation

Sometimes a syringe may be given to you after extractions. This syringe is to be used 3 days *after* surgery, to remove food debris from the extraction site. In a cup, dispense warm tap water and dissolve a pinch of salt. Aspirate the salt water mixture into the syringe. Gently angle the curved tip of the

syringe **into** the extraction site. With a circular and in and out movement of the syringe tip, irrigate the extraction site. Use 2 syringes full of salt water to remove food debris after each meal. Continue to irrigate the extraction site until the extraction site closes, which is approximately 3 weeks.

### **Antibiotics**

Antibiotics are not routinely prescribed, however if you are provided with one, please take as directed.

### **Dry Socket (Alveolar Osteitis)**

Dry socket is a condition of delayed healing that is painful and is thought to be related to certain bacteria that live in the mouth. It is not a serious condition of an infection, but it can be quite painful. Dry socket presents with a distinct severe throbbing/aching pain in the jaw that often radiates toward to the ear and forward along the jaw. This typically occurs between 3-5 days after the procedure. If pain relievers are inadequate, please contact our office as an in-office treatment may help to decrease the pain.

### **Activity**

It is important to rest the day of your procedure. If you were sedated, avoid driving or operating any machinery for 24 hours after surgery. Avoid strenuous activity for 48 hours as this will increase blood pressure and may cause the surgical site to bleed.

## **When to Call the Office**

- Fever over 101.5 degrees that occurs more than 24 hours after the procedure
- Severe, bright red bleeding that you cannot control
- Severe, hard swelling that is not improving after one week
- Prolonged severe pain that is not relieved after the pain medication
- Rash, difficulty breathing, or severe vomiting

## **Prescription Refill Request**

Prescription refill requests for narcotics pain relievers must be made during normal business hours as you will be required to pick up a new handwritten prescription. Government regulation prohibit the calling-in or faxing of these prescriptions.

## **How to Contact Us**

If you have questions, please call our office at 402-933-9009 during the hours of 8:00AM - 4:30 PM Monday-Thursday and 8:00 AM- 2:30 PM Friday. In case of emergency, nights, weekends, and holidays there is a doctor on call at 402-933-9009.