

ORAL SURGERY POST-OP PROTOCOLS

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER YOUR SURGERY

Proper wound healing is dependent on good home care after your surgery. Please read the following instructions carefully (they may or may not all apply to you).

THE FUNDAMENTALS:

- Soft foods for 1 week.
No straws!
- Keep your mouth clean!
- Take your medications as prescribed.
- No smoking, drinking, or exercise for 1 week.

DIET

Good nutrition is paramount to good healing!

Drink plenty of fluids. Limit the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods as chewing may be uncomfortable.

You will need to be on a soft food and liquid diet for one week after surgery.

Do not use straws.

It is very important that food does not get stuck in the extraction or healing sites.

Examples of food you can have include yogurt, rice, mashed potatoes, milkshakes, protein shakes, fruit smoothies, oatmeal, warm (not hot) soup. Cold foods can help keep the surgical area comfortable.

Avoid crunchy foods and spicy foods. Avoid carbonated beverages.

As you return to a normal diet after one week, be mindful to take smaller bites and avoid chewing near the surgical site. Not following these diet guidelines can delay healing and could also cause infection if food gets stuck in the surgical sites.

HYGIENE

It is very important to keep the surgical sites clean in order to ensure proper healing. Although you will likely be sore, an attempt at normal hygiene is recommended.

Do not use toothpaste the first 24 hours after surgery. Continue to brush your teeth and tongue, as well as floss, but please avoid brushing the surgical sites directly!

Do not rinse and spit immediately after surgery. Once the bleeding has mostly stopped, you can gently brush your teeth and tongue before going to sleep on the first night after surgery.

Please avoid rigorous swishing. Your doctor may prescribe a medicated mouthwash. Follow their instructions for use and duration of this mouthwash. Do not use over-the-counter mouthwash for 2 weeks!

Beginning the evening of your surgery, you can rinse with warm salt water. Continue this rinse for 3-4 times per day for the first week after surgery to help keep the surgical site clean.

Most infections that occur postoperatively are the result of food particles getting stuck in the surgical site. We cannot emphasize enough that you need to keep your mouth clean and free of food debris!

PAIN CONTROL

Take all the medications (pain & antibiotics) as directed by your doctor.

Take your pain medications before your "numbness" has worn off.

You have been prescribed medications that should be adequate to relieve your pain significantly.

It is much easier to stay ahead of the pain than to get out of pain. Take your medications as directed and set your alarm as a reminder throughout the night for the first 24 hours.

If severe pain persists, please reach out to our team. If you are prescribed antibiotics, take it as prescribed and finish your full dose.

Nausea can result from the pain medications. Eating food with your medications can help prevent this.

Pain usually peaks on day 3. If you have been prescribed a narcotic, please avoid operating heavy machinery and also avoid consuming alcohol.




NO SMOKING, DRINKING, OR EXERCISE

Smoking and drinking alcohol are both detrimental activities to proper healing. **DO NOT SMOKE OR DRINK ALCOHOL OR EXERCISE FOR 7 DAYS AFTER SURGERY.** Do not drink alcohol while taking pain pills or antibiotics. The use of alcohol and smoking lowers the immune system, making you more prone to infection and dry sockets.

Cigarette smoking has chemicals in it that can cause pain. If you smoke, you will likely have pain even when taking pain medication. Sucking on the cigarette can dislodge the blood clots and make you bleed even more. Healing is significantly delayed in smokers over non-smokers.

Please restrict physical activity, excessive speaking, and rest as much as possible on the day of surgery. Avoid exercise such as working out or vigorous sports activities for at least 7 days.






IMPLANT SURGERY & BONE GRAFTING

Implant surgery procedures: Avoid any contact or chewing directly in the area of the implant(s) surgery for 5 weeks following the surgery as this can cause the implant to fail. If you experience persistent numbness the morning following implant surgery, please notify our team as soon as possible.

Bone grafting procedures: Your bone graft is made of many particles. You will find some small granules in your mouth for the first several days. Do not be alarmed by these. The grafted area is overpacked to allow for the loss of a small amount of particles. It is normal to have some of them come out of the graft site and into your mouth (or into your nose if you had a sinus augmentation procedure). To minimize the amount of particles being dislodged:

- Do not apply pressure with your tongue or fingers to the grafted area because the material is movable during the initial healing and this can allow failure of the grafting.
 - Do not lift or pull the lip to look at the sutures; this can actually cause damage to the wound site and tear the sutures.
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SWELLING & BLEEDING

Swelling: Some degree of swelling and bruising is normal. It is expected and may increase over the first 3 days and will take an additional 4 to 5 days to go away. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag, or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. 4 days after surgery, you can begin to apply moist heat via a warm compress to help resolve swelling. If swelling is excessive, spreading, or impairing your vision or breathing, call us immediately.

Bleeding: Some pinkness in saliva is normal for the first 24-48 hours. If active bleeding persists, place enough moistened gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for the another 30-45 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary. Keep your head elevated above your heart for the first day (i.e., use a lounge chair, lazy boy, or put 2 pillows under your head when lying down). If bleeding still persists or becomes heavy, you may substitute a caffeinated tea bag (brewed, squeezed damp-dry and adequately cooled before applying) for 30-45 minutes. If heavy bleeding persists and cannot be controlled, please call us. If you cannot get in touch with us after hours in time, please call Emergency Medical Services (911).

SUTURES, DRY SOCKET & MISC.

Sutures: You may have several sutures ("stitches") placed to hold gingival tissues in the proper position for ideal healing. The loss of them during healing is usually not a problem. Do NOT disturb your sutures with your tongue, toothbrush, or in any other manner since displacement could impair healing. Your sutures will dissolve or will be removed between 1-4 weeks after surgery.

Dry Sockets Following Tooth Extractions: This is the most common post extraction complication and is very painful. Avoid smoking or suction through a straw for at least 3 days after surgery to help prevent dry socket. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, do NOT use it for the first five days.

Miscellaneous:

If you have a denture, plate, partial or flipper, ask your dentist if you can wear it following surgery. You may experience sensitivity to sweets and extremely hot or cold foods or beverages for the first 4-6 weeks. This is normal and should not alarm you.

Contact 911 if you have uncontrolled bleeding and cannot reach our team or if the patient loses or has lost consciousness.