

Tooth removal and other oral surgical procedures are similar to any surgery; your own care in following the doctor's instruction speeds recovery. Read and follow these directions carefully.

#### **FIRST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS**

DO NOT rinse or spit for 24 hours. This prolongs bleeding and may disturb the blood clot. It is better to just swallow normally during this time. AFTER 24 HOURS you may carefully brush your teeth and use **warm** salt water. Rinse gently and carefully three to four times a day. (1/2 tsp. salt in 8 oz. glass of water)

ALLOW gauze pads to remain in place for at least 60 minutes after leaving the office, maintaining constant biting pressure during this time; then, remove gauze and throw it away. If bleeding continues, replace with another gauze sponge as provided. Some bleeding is normal following oral surgery. IF excessive bleeding occurs, fold a piece of sterile gauze as tightly as possible and place this **DIRECTLY OVER THE EMPTY SPACE** from where the tooth was removed or on the point of bleeding and bite hard against the gum for 20-30 minutes. Repeat if necessary.

Occasionally, a medicated dressing may be placed in the extraction site by the doctor. Try not to disturb this dressing.

#### **ACTIVITY**

AVOID all excessive activity. Do not pick at the surgical area, do not sip through a straw, avoid alcoholic beverages until healing is well established and avoid smoking for a full week.

DO NOT drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after sedation or general anesthesia.

#### **COLD PACKS**

Apply an ice bag or application for 20 minutes; then, leave it off for 20 minutes. Repeat this procedure if necessary for 24 hours. Impacted teeth, and involved surgical procedures warrant immediate application of ice and particular attention to oral cleanliness.

#### **EATING**

DO NOT eat until the numbness has worn off to prevent biting your lip or tongue. Soft foods are advisable for at least 24 hours. Drink as much liquids as possible; fruit juices, milk, soft drinks, etc. **DO NOT STOP EATING!**

#### **LIP LUBRICANTS**

Apply a liberal coating of Vaseline or lip lubricant containing lanolin to the lips and corners of the mouth to prevent forming of "cold scores" or lip cracks.

#### **COMMON PROBLEMS FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY**

##### **Days 1-5 BLEEDING**

To control excessive bleeding the extra gauze pads or a tea bag that has been soaked in cool water for 3 minutes can be placed **on the extraction site**. Close teeth tightly for 20-30 minutes, maintaining pressure all the time. Swallow normally. If necessary, this can be repeated several times.

##### **SWELLING**

Swelling following any surgical procedure is normal event. This is particularly true of oral surgery and most certainly true when the surgery has involved the removal of an impacted tooth. It may vary from minimal to extensive and may persist for several days. **IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT AN INFECTION HAS OCCURRED!** Post surgical infections in these procedures are extremely rare. Antibiotics are **NOT** indicated routinely and will be prescribed by this office if they are felt to be necessary. Your doctor may have given you a prescription to decrease swelling; take as directed.

##### **PAIN**

This is the post common post-operative problem. The medication prescribed should make the pain tolerable, but not necessarily totally eliminated. If nausea or cramping occurs after taking pain mediation, call this office.

##### **OTHER PAIN**

If after 4 or 5 days you begin to have symptoms in the area of surgery or pain directed toward your ear, call this office.

##### **SUTURES**

Sutures, if they are used, are dissolvable. They will dissolve anywhere from 4 to 7 days.

##### **FEVER**

A slight fever for 24 to 48 hours after surgery is common. If it persists, or is over 101 degrees (taken orally) call this office.

#### **SHARP BONY PROJECTIONS**

During the healing process, small sharp fragments of bone may loosen and work up through the gum. These are not roots and often work out by themselves. Return for their simple removal if uncomfortable.

#### **DISCOLORATION OF THE FACE**

Bruising or discoloration is caused by bleeding beneath the surface of the skin. It usually corrects itself within a week or two after surgery.

#### **SORE THROAT**

Rather common after third molar surgery, a sore throat usually will improve in a day or two by gargling with salt water. If it persists or becomes severe or is associated with a fever, consult this office.

#### **STIFFNESS (TRISMUS)**

The inability to move the jaw after oral surgery is a common occurrence. It usually is a direct result of the swelling discussed above. Exercise, as chewing gum, is an aid to limbering up the muscles involved. If stiffness is very severe or is associated with a fever consult this office.

#### **NUMBNESS (PARESTHESIA, ANESTHESIA)**

Often operations are performed very close to nerves. The post-operative swelling or bruising of the nerves during the procedure can cause numbness, especially of the chin or tongue. This condition is usually temporary and may disappear as the nerve heals.

#### **THROMBOPHLEBITIS (INFLAMMATION OF VEIN)**

Rarely, after intra-venous sedation, the vein in your arm may become uncomfortable, red and firm. If this occurs, please call our office for treatment.

#### **ORTHODONTIC RETAINERS**

Continue wearing your retainers as instructed by your orthodontist.

*We hope that your visit to our office was comfortable and pleasant. We appreciate your confidence and look forward to being of service to you and your friends in the future.*

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# **Important Instructions For Your Comfort Following Oral Surgery**

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