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# SURGICAL EXTRACTIONS

## Post-Operative Instructions

### **Gauze squares and bleeding**

A small amount of bleeding is normal and usually stops within a few hours. It is not uncommon to see some oozing and discoloration of saliva for 24-48 hours. Following your oral surgery, gauze pressure packs may have been placed over the area of surgery and you were asked to bite down. This applied pressure to the area and hastens control of bleeding. The original gauze should remain in place for at least 30 minutes. After this amount of time, the gauze can be removed. Continued bleeding will require replacement of gauze from pack. Make sure the gauze pack is placed over the extraction site, not between the teeth. This and subsequent packs (if necessary) should remain for at least 30 minutes each. Persistent or vigorous bleeding warrants a phone call for additional instruction.

### **Stitches**

Stitches may have been placed during your surgery. If non-dissolving stitches were placed (generally black in color), they will need to be removed in 1 week. Dissolving stitches (generally yellow or tan in color), last 2 to 10 days and will fall out on their own. If a single stitch comes out prematurely, it does not cause any problems.

**Pain**

A variable amount of discomfort is expected with oral surgery: Mild pain can be relieved with Tylenol or Ibuprofen. This should be taken as directed by the manufacturer. If more severe pain is anticipated prescription medication will be provided. Generally, a prescription should be filled and the first dose taken before the local anesthetic wears off (2 to 3 hours). Severe pain that persists for more than 3 to 4 days or pain that increases in intensity after 3 to 4 days may be due to a "dry socket." In such cases, call the office for an appointment.

**ACTIVITY**

Take it easy! You have just had a surgical procedure and this requires reduced activity to allow healing. You may feel fine immediately after the surgery, but when the local anesthetic wears off you will experience discomfort. Resume your activities as you start to feel better. If you were sedated during the procedure or if you are taking prescribed pain medications, you may be sleepy and your reflexes may be impaired. You must avoid driving and working with dangerous equipment. Sedated patients must not be left alone after their surgery.

**Swelling**

Oral surgery procedures or extractions may cause facial swelling. To reduce the amount of swelling, your doctor may recommend use of an ice pack. If recommended, this should begin immediately after the surgery. The ice pack should be applied for 20 minutes, removed for 10 minutes, reapplied for 20 minutes, etc ... until bedtime. The ice should be continued in a similar manner the next morning until 24 hours have elapsed after surgery. The ice should then be discontinued. Swelling, despite ice packs, may increase for 24 to 48 hours. This may be soothing and may help reduce swelling. Heat should not be applied for more than 20 minutes three times a day. Black and blue marks may appear on the face. They will gradually disappear in a week to 10 days. There may be some tightening of the jaw muscles. This is normal and will relax in a few days.

**Diet**

Good nutrition is important following oral surgery. The nature of your diet will depend on the extent of your surgery. Generally, a liquid or soft; no-chew diet is recommended for the first 2 to 3 days following surgery. Your diet may be advanced, thereafter, to the extent that you can avoid discomfort and bleeding. Should these signs appear, a softer diet is recommended. Hot, spicy foods or liquids should be avoided. Do not use a straw. Fruit juices-ice cream, soups, milkshakes, puddings, jello, etc. are recommended during the first 24 hours. Parents, watch young children! They may bite their tongue or lips while the local anesthetic is working. It is best to limit their diet to liquids until the "numbness" is gone. Smoking should also be avoided as long as possible.

**Nausea or vomiting**

This is most often caused by narcotic pain medications. If the nausea is mild, continue taking the medication as prescribed. If severe, discontinue the medication. If nausea or vomiting persists, call the Dental School. Delay eating until the vomiting ceases. Start with clear liquids (water, 7-Up, apple juice, etc.) Progress to "full liquids" (milk, soups, orange juice, broth, etc.) and a soft chew diet, as tolerated.

**Oral Hygiene**

Salt water rinses can be initiated 24 hours after your surgery. Rinsing should be done in a slow and gentle manner to avoid disrupting the newly formed blood clot. One-half teaspoon of table salt dissolved in an 8-ounce glass of warm water makes an excellent rinse. Salt water rinses will make the mouth feel better and they will also help to keep the mouth clean. Rinsing should be done after meals and before bedtime for the first few days and it may be continued as long as it seems to be beneficial to you. Spitting and vigorous swishing are to be avoided. Brushing can be done in areas remote from the extraction sites the day following surgery. Gentle brushing with a soft brush may be started in the extraction area after 3 to 4 days.

**Medications**

For minor procedures, a non-prescription pain medication is preferred. Ibuprofen, Advil, Nuprin, Motrin are good medications. Adults may take up to 400mg every 4 to 6 hours. Tylenol and Aspirin are also very effective. Prescription pain medications may have a narcotic derivative. Although effective for pain relief, side effects include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, anxiety, constipation, etc. DO NOT drive or operate dangerous machinery while taking these medications. Narcotic medications should not be taken on an empty stomach.

**Antibiotics**

Most procedures do not require antibiotic coverage. Antibiotics may be prescribed for an infection, heart murmur, prosthetic heart valves, or prosthetic joints (knee, hips, etc.) Antibiotics may render birth control pills less effective. Other precautions to avoid pregnancy are necessary while using the birth control pill and antibiotics. If antibiotics are prescribed, be sure to follow the instruction on usage carefully.

**Bone Chips**

Occasionally small bony spicules will be present in extraction sites. This is not unusual. If they are small and asymptomatic, they will usually come out on their own with time. Larger pieces of bone or those that are causing pain may require removal.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions about your progress please call the office. Please try to call during regular office hours; however we have coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Soft Diet Suggestions**

Soups	Yogurt	Jell-O/ Pudding
Scrambled/Soft boiled eggs	Mashed Potatoes	Pasta
Grits	Applesauce	Fish
Cream of Wheat/ Oatmeal	Ice Cream	Pancakes
Cottage cheese	Canned/Potted Meats	Smoothies/Protein Drinks

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