

Home Care Instructions After Wisdom Tooth Removal

The Removal of impacted teeth is a serious surgical procedure. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

Immediately Following Surgery

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be kept in place for a half hour. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as you begin to feel discomfort. This will usually coincide with the local anesthetic becoming diminished.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.
- Place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on Swelling for an explanation.

Bleeding

Some bleeding or redness in the saliva is normal for 24 hours. Excessive bleeding which results in your mouth filling rapidly with blood can frequently be controlled by biting with pressure on a gauze pad placed directly on the bleeding wound for 30 minutes. If bleeding continues, please call for further instructions.

Sutures are placed in the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged. This is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and disregard it. The sutures will be removed approximately one week after surgery. The removal of sutures required no anesthesia or needles. It takes only a minute or so, and there is not discomfort associated with this procedure. So it's really nothing to worry about.

Swelling

Swelling is a normal occurrence after surgery. To minimize swelling, apply ice for the first 36 hours. Apply ice pack to the side of the face, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off while awake. After 36 hours, the application of a moist warm towel should be applied continuously for as long as tolerable.

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal postoperative occurrence, which may occur two to three days post-operatively. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of discoloration.

Comfort

You should begin taking pain medication as soon as you feel the local anesthetic wearing off. Four moderate pain, one or two Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol may be taken. Tylenol may be taken every three to four hours. Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) may be taken instead of Tylenol. Ibuprofen bought over the counter comes in 200 mg tablets: Two to three tablets may be taken every three to four hours as needed for pain. For severe pain, the prescribed medication should be taken as directed.

If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of rash or other unfavorable reaction. Call the office if you have any questions.

Diet

Drink plenty of fluids. Do not use straws when drinking from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. Avoid hot liquids and hard food. Soft food and liquids should be eaten on the day of surgery. Return to a normal diet as soon as possible unless otherwise directed.

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on Coke, tea, or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a 15 minute period. When the nausea subsides, you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine.

Oral Hygiene

No rinsing of any kind should be performed until the day following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse gently. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least five to six times a day with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt especially after eating.

There will be a cavity where the tooth was removed. The cavity will gradually fill in with new tissue over the next month. In the meantime, the area should be kept clean especially after meals with salt-water rinses or a toothbrush.

A dry socket is when the blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and even pain to the ear may occur two to three days following surgery. Call the office if this occurs.

Activity

Keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery. If you are considering exercise, throbbing or bleeding may occur. If this occurs, you should discontinue exercising. Be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get light headed, stop exercising.

Other Complications

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs, there is no cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation. So be careful.
- A Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.
- You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. You were not able to eat or drink prior to surgery. It was also difficult to take fluids. Taking pain medications can make you dizzy. You could get light headed when you suddenly stand up. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute and then get up.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are the bony walls, which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed by Dr. Hoang.
- If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as Vaseline.
- Sore throats and pain when swelling are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in the two to three days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event that will resolve in time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at (504) 366-3052. After office hours, you can call us at (504) 475-8403 or email us at info@geauxsmiles.com.