

## CARE FOLLOWING DENTAL SURGERY

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**Bleeding:** To prevent unnecessary bleeding, moisten gauze sponges and hold them firmly between your jaws and over the socket for 30 minutes following the operation. If bleeding persists, the procedure should be repeated. You have been given a supply of gauze pads. A warm soaked tea bag wrapped in cotton or gauze is also effective.

This procedure should be continued for a few hours or until most of the bleeding has stopped. Change the packs if they become saturated with blood. If profuse or continued bleeding occurs, call the dental office. It is not unusual to have some slight oozing for up to 24 hours, for this reason it is a good idea to place a towel on your pillow overnight.

Rest today and keep your head slightly elevated if lying down. Do not engage in physical activity since this promotes bleeding.

**Medications:** Unless you already have your medications, pick them up very soon and take as directed. Sometimes a long acting local anesthetic is used which will prolong numbness and pain relief for up to 12 hours. If it is used, take a pain pill when you first start feeling discomfort. If regular anesthetic was used, take a pain pill within an hour following the procedure.

If sedative medications were administered, do not drive for at least 24 hours after this procedure.

**Eating:** It is important to get adequate nutrition after surgery to help the healing process. Fluids are especially important but do not use a straw. You may want to start with fruit juices and then progress to a soft diet, avoiding foods that are difficult to chew for a few days. Refrain from alcoholic drinks.

**Rinsing and Brushing:** Try not to rinse or spit for the first 24 hours, since this will contribute to clot dislodgment and dry sockets. After 24 hours, rinse with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon table salt in a 8 oz. water) every 4-6 hours.

Besides early rinsing, other actions that can contribute to loss of the clot and potentially painful dry sockets are using a straw and smoking. It is best to refrain from smoking for 4-5 days.

Starting on the day after surgery, carefully brush in the areas of the mouth not involved by the extractions.

**Ice Packs:** To help prevent swelling, ice packs should be applied on the sides of your face adjacent to the surgery sites. This is especially important if bone was removed. To the extent possible, apply for periods of 20 minutes on and 10 minutes off until bedtime on the day of surgery. Starting on the day after surgery the application of heat is appropriate.

By three days swelling will reach its maximum. After this time, it will go down rapidly. If it does not, check with the doctor. In the event of facial or neck bruising a few days following the procedure, resolution of the discoloration can be expected with frequent heat packs and massage.

**Post-Operative Check-up:** The surgery site needs to be examined to make certain that healing is progressing normally. In addition, sutures may need to be removed.

**Unforeseen Complications:** If you suspect any problems with the normal course of healing, do not hesitate to call immediately.

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Sometimes patients develop such things as allergies to medications (generalized rash, itching, etc.), infection (foul taste, unusual or prolonged swelling), and dry sockets (throbbing pain occurring 3-7 days following the procedure). These and other potential problems are treatable if brought to our attention.

In our office, we are doing everything we can to make your surgery as painless and uneventful as possible. Your attention to these directions is vital to an uneventful recovery.