

Surgery Post-Operative Instructions and Information

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- 1. Bleeding:** Apply constant firm pressure (biting) on a thick folded roll of moistened gauze for 45 minutes after the surgery, and then discard the gauze. This acts as a pressure dressing to help form a blood clot. You can expect slight oozing of blood for the first few days that will stain your saliva or spot a moistened cloth; this is normal. *If profuse excessive bleeding that pools in your mouth occurs at any time during the first few days, apply constant firm pressure (biting) on a thick folded roll of moistened gauze or 2 moistened tea bags over the surgical site for 45 minutes. Repeat if necessary. If significant, excessive bleeding continues after this, contact the Clinic.*
- 2. Rest:** Limit activities for the first 24 hours after surgery. Sit in a semi-upright position and use pillows for support. Place a towel over your pillow to prevent blood from staining.
- 3. Swelling and Bruising:** Normal after surgery, and will vary with the person and type of surgery. Apply ice to the jaw and cheek area during the first 24 hours to reduce swelling, this is important. Use the ice packs 15 minutes on/15 minutes off, and then repeat. After the first 24 hours, ice will not affect swelling but may reduce pain. Swelling will reach a maximum about 48-72 hours after surgery. Bruising will resolve over a period of days.
- 4. Infection, Fever and Antibiotics:** Most healthy patients have a 2-3% risk of developing infection after surgery. If the doctor felt you were at increased risk of infection because of your general health or the type of surgery, you will be placed on antibiotic medication. It is important that you follow directions on the label and take the medication until finished. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the Clinic immediately. It is a normal reaction to surgery to develop a slight elevation in temperature for 24-48 hours after surgery. If the fever persists or is highly elevated and you feel generally fatigued, please contact the Clinic. You will be at the greatest risk of infection 3 days after surgery.
- 5. Osteomyelitis and Osteonecrosis:** In very rare cases, an infection called osteomyelitis or osteonecrosis can develop that will result in failure of the surgical site to heal with prolonged pain, exposed bone, and drainage. If this develops, another X-ray and surgical procedure is necessary, which would involve a fee. Contact the Clinic if healing seems very delayed and/or if pain develops around the healing socket.
- 6. Bone fragments & Sharp ridges:** Occasionally, there may be small pieces of bone between the sockets that loose blood supply, become dislodged and move to the surface of the socket; this is usually painless. Development of a sharp edge of the socket is more common after surgical extractions. In some cases another surgical procedure is necessary remove the bone fragment or to smooth the bone, which would involve a fee. Contact the Clinic if pain develops around the healing socket.
- 7. Surgical Site Pain and Pain Reliever Instructions:** Pain normally reaches a peak 48-72 hours after surgery. If the doctor anticipates you will have only minor pain, take over-the-counter Tylenol or Advil. Avoid aspirin because it interferes with blood clotting. Follow the directions on the bottle of any prescribed medication. The pain medication may make you drowsy, so you should use caution about driving or performing important tasks. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the Clinic immediately.
- 8. Muscle Pain:** It is common to have swelling in the muscles after surgery and this will resolve with time. Starting 3 days after surgery you can begin application of moist heat 4-6 times daily to the jaw muscles to help resolve muscle pain. Do not begin sooner than 3 days after surgery or you can risk developing an infection.
- 9. Nausea:** Usually due to swallowing a small amount of blood with the surgery. Some medications can also cause nausea. A small amount of carbonated drink every 1 hour will usually relieve this feeling. If nausea continues or is significant, contact the Clinic.
- 10. Diet during first 24 hours—Surgical Extractions:** Your first three meals should consist mostly of cold liquids; do not drink hot liquids during the first 24 hours. Soft foods and liquids high in vitamins and protein are recommended. Dietary supplements such as Instant Breakfast or Ensure work well. Avoid drinking through a straw. **Diet for Basic Extractions (& Surgical Extractions after 24 hours):** Eat regularly whatever you can tolerate. Soft foods and liquids like cooked vegetables, pasta and soup that are high in vitamins and protein are recommended. Avoid nuts, popcorn, and crunchy or spicy foods that can irritate the surgical site.
- 11. Oral Hygiene:** After 24 hours you should begin to rinse your mouth gently with a solution of 1 teaspoon of salt in a warm glass of water 5 or 6 times daily. Continue this for the first week after surgery. For the first 4 days brush all other teeth normally but clean the surgical area with a moist cotton swab/Q-tip. Return to brushing normally after 4 days. ****For wisdom teeth: in addition to the above, flush out the lower sockets with salt water for 10 days using the syringe provided and following the instructions you were shown at the Clinic.****
- 12. Smoking:** Can cause bleeding or dry socket, and can delay healing and increase the risk of infection. Smoking should be avoided or greatly reduced for 48 hours after surgery. Use a moist gauze pack over the surgical site if you must smoke.
- 13. Dry Socket:** A significant sharp pain in the jaw and ear due to partial or complete loss of the blood clot that occurs 1-5 days after the surgery. Avoid vigorous rinsing, spitting, smoking and drinking through a straw for the first few days because these will disturb the blood clot. Keep the area very clean with warm salt water rinses and a moist cotton swab to remove food debris. If dry socket develops, contact the Clinic.
- 14. Antibiotics (females):** Will inactivate most birth control medication; use other methods of contraception until your next menstrual cycle.
- 15. Sutures:** You will be advised if sutures have been placed over the surgical site. If they are not the type that dissolves they will be removed at your follow-up visit. Dissolving sutures begin to loosen within 3-5 days.
- 16. Sedation:** If you were sedated it is important for someone to stay with you until you have recovered from the effects of the medications.