

POST-OP TOOTH REMOVAL

Now that you've had a tooth removed we would like your post operative course to progress as easily as possible. Follow these instructions for the best possible outcome.

Bleeding

Water dampened gauze packing was placed over the extraction site opening(s) immediately after your procedure. Placing a light continuous biting force on the packing will place pressure and slow the bleeding much like it would on a cut on your hand or other area of your body. We recommend light continuous pressure (not chewing) for one hour after your procedure.

After the first hour remove the packing. The gauze may be blood soaked or spotted. Leave gauze out for fifteen minutes. After that time check in a mirror for the amount of bleeding.

If your saliva is blood red to moderately pink – continue with another 1-2 clean, dampened, folded gauze sections over the extraction site(s) and bite for an additional hour. Repeat hourly as necessary.

If your saliva is light pink or shows only small amounts of blood, discontinue gauze use. It is common to have light pink saliva for 24 hours following tooth removal.

It is IMPORTANT to judge bleeding by the appearance of the saliva not the gauze. The gauze will continue to be marked by blood up to 24 hours if you continue to use it unnecessarily.

Clot Management

Once the bleeding stops and a blood clot forms (like a scab) it is important for that clot to stay in place for normal healing to occur.

For the first 24 hours avoid vigorous rinsing, spitting, smoking, or drinking from soda straws. All of these have a tendency to disturb or cause loss of immature clots. An improperly formed or prematurely lost clot could lead to a "dry socket".

Swelling/Bruising

Most cases should not involve swelling, but if your case was one in which tissue or bone needed removal (impactions) swelling may occur.

In the first 24 hours ice to the surgical area may relieve swelling. Wrap a "baggie" full of ice in a hand towel or washcloth and apply to the skin on the effected side for 15 minutes on/ 15 minutes off. If both sides are effected alternate sides every 15 minutes. Ice will be less effective the second day

If swelling persists or starts some days after the procedure an infection may be present. This is usually accompanied by a fever. If this occurs contact our office.

Bruising though uncommon can occur. Time is usually the best cure for this.

Pain Management

Pain relievers are important in managing your post operative experience. The agents used are dependant on the severity of your procedure and an individual's pain tolerance. A balance between pain relief and your ability to go on with your normal life is important. It is best if you take your pain reliever in the first hour after surgery before the anesthetic wears off.

It has been found that the ibuprophen type drugs are very effective at post extraction pain management. They are over-the-counter, therefore cost effective, and can be used safely without interfering with daily function, unlike other drugs such as narcotics.

We suggest the following depending on your procedure and level of discomfort:

Ibuprophen: 400mg every 3-4 hours; 600mg every 4-6 hours; or 800mg every 6-8 hour. Ibuprophen is typically sold in 200mg tablets and one should not exceed taking more than 3200mg of the drug in one day. Of course if your procedure requires a stronger acting agent we will accommodate that.

It is not unusual to have a need for pain relievers up to 3-7 days after your procedure. The need and amount of medication used should lessen with healing.

Eating

It is important to eat after surgery to give your body the building blocks needed to enhance the healing process. Depending on the extent of your surgery a soft to medium textured diet is recommended initially (sauces, pasta, scrambled eggs, soft meats) Try to chew more on the unaffected side. Avoid sharp edged chips or hard foods that could accidentally "poke" the healing area. Increase your diet as healing progresses.

Cleaning

After the first 24 hours rinsing with a warm salt water solution (1 tsp/ 8 oz) is a great way to clean the area.

Brushing near the surgical site should be avoided the first day. Gently reinitiate lightly the next day. Expect a little blood on the toothbrush initially. This should stop as the tissues become sturdier and the bacteria are cleaned away routinely.

Avoid waterpik use for 1 week and resume only at the lowest setting at first.

Dry Socket

A Dry Socket is usually caused by a lost or malformed blood clot which allows for some surgical site bone to be exposed. It is the irritation of this bone that causes the pain.

Dry socket pain is most frequently noticed near the 3rd to 4th day post operatively, with symptoms of a deep throbbing pain within the jaw. Typically patients feel things were healing, getting better, than suddenly worsen.

Dry sockets can be treated by placing medications within the surgical area which allow for normal healing to occur. So call if you suspect a dry socket.