



Care of Your Mouth After Oral Surgery

BLEEDING

Maintain firm pressure on the gauze to control bleeding. Remove gauze as they become saturated and replace with new gauze. You may need to replace gauze several times before bleeding is under control. Bleeding can be minimized by sitting upright or resting with the head elevated on pillows. If bleeding persists in spite of the gauze compresses and elevated head, you may moisten a tea bag in warm water, squeeze it out gently, and place it in the mouth over the bleeding site for approximately 15 minutes. Repeat as necessary. If bleeding is excessive or cannot be controlled, please contact the office (972) 727-5001. Continued oozing of blood is normal for 12-24 hours. It is a good idea to sleep with an old towel over your pillow the first night. Please keep in mind that bleeding may seem more than it actually is when diluted with saliva.

DIET

After surgery, begin food intake with cool, light liquids (water, sprite, jello, apple juice). Gradually work up to heavier foods (soups) and then soft foods (yogurt, oatmeal). You may eat anything that you can chew comfortably. Avoid very hot liquids and foods like steak and chips for the first day after surgery. Milkshakes sometimes feel good after oral surgery, but they should NOT be sucked through a straw. Use a spoon. Vigorous sucking through a straw can disrupt the clot and delay healing. Alcohol containing beverages will slow healing in the first few days after oral surgery. Refrain from alcohol while taking pain medication.

SWELLING/BRUISING

Ice packs may be used to reduce swelling in the first 24 hours. After 24 hours, switch to a heating pad or warm, moist compresses. Anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, advil, or motrin can also help with swelling. Tylenol does NOT contain an anti-inflammatory agent. Swelling will be most marked on day 2 or 3 and begins to disappear on day 4 or 5. It may take up to 2 weeks to fully dissipate. Bruising is also normal after oral surgery.

NAUSEA

Nausea may develop, especially if blood was swallowed during the procedure. The most common cause of nausea is prescription medication. Always have a bit of food and liquid in the stomach when taking prescribed pain medications. To reduce nausea, sip on clear liquids, take Maalox or Mylanta, and rest.

PAIN/STIFF JAWS

Some discomfort is to be expected. It is easier to stay on top of the pain rather than waiting until it hurts badly and then trying to catch up to the pain. If you are unable to control pain with over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication, prescribed pain medication, or rest, please call our office. Stiffness of the jaw muscles is nature's way of resting the part that is healing. Muscles should begin to relax and be less sore after 5-6 days. * A prescription pain medication is not always prescribed. It depends on the extent of the surgery.

FEVER

Low-grade fever is a normal part of the healing process. Fever over 101 may indicate infection, and you should call the office. Keeping well hydrated helps to prevent fevers and infections.

ORAL HYGIENE

Brush and floss your teeth as normal, but avoid brushing the surgical sites directly for a few days to prevent disruption of the forming clot. **DO NOT** use alcohol-based mouth rinses. You may rinse **GENTLY** with warm salt water (1 tsp salt per 8 oz water). No vigorous swishing or spitting because this may disrupt the clot. Keeping your mouth clean will freshen your breath and reduce the chance of infection.

DRY SOCKET

The key to healing is a clot forming in the socket where the tooth used to be. A dry socket is when the clot becomes dislodged and leaves an open socket of exposed bone. This usually happens 3-5 days after the extraction, and is most common with lower back teeth and in smokers. A clue that you may be experiencing a dry socket would be if you were feeling better and better each day and then all of the sudden on the 3rd-5th day your pain increases and may be felt radiating up towards your ear. You will need to return to the office for further treatment.

STITCHES

Stitches may have been placed. Depending on the type of stitch used, you may need to return for removal in 5-7 days. If dissolving sutures were used, you may notice small pieces of suture material in your mouth around days 5-10.

SMOKING

Smoking increases your risk of dry socket and infection, and delays healing. Refrain from smoking for 5-7 days.

NUMBNESS

You may be numb for several hours after surgery. Take care not to chew sores in your cheeks, lip, or tongue while numb.

ALLERGIC REACTION

True allergic reactions are characterized by generalized rash, excessive itching, and/or swelling of joints/airway. Stop taking the medication and call the office or 911 depending on the severity of the reaction.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Rest is recommended for the first day or two after surgery. Excessive activity can increase blood flow and therefore increase bleeding, pain, and swelling at the surgery site.

BONY EDGES

Sometimes bony fragments will work their way to the surface of the gums after surgery. They usually work their way out on their own, but if they are uncomfortable, you may need to return to the office for an additional procedure to have these pieces removed.

Please do not hesitate to call the office if you have any questions or concerns (972) 727-5001