



### Surgical Post-Operative Instructions

Because of the importance to your physical safety and comfort, it is essential that you understand and follow these instructions. If you have any questions or need assistance following discharge from the clinic, please call the number listed below.

#### After your appointment TODAY:

1. While riding home, wear a seat belt. When you get home, a responsible adult should help you get out of the car and assist you inside. Lie down with your head slightly elevated and rest. **If you have had a sedative** (like an IV) do not attempt to get up and walk without help, even to the bathroom, until the effects of any sedatives has completely worn off, often the following morning. Do not drive a car, operate machinery, or care for small children until the following day.
2. **Bleeding and gauze.** Keep your mouth closed on the gauze packs for at least one hour. Some oozing of blood from the extraction sites is normal. If there is continued bleeding, fold one of the gauze packages into quarters, moisten it with water, and place it over the area that is bleeding. If a wisdom tooth was removed, the pack will be *behind your back teeth*, not between your teeth. Close your mouth on the gauze to apply firm pressure. Leave the gauze in place one hour, and then change it if needed
3. **Pain medication.** Take the prescribed pain medicine as soon as possible (remember not to drink with a straw!). Eating something soft like a milkshake (use a spoon) is less likely to cause an upset stomach. Take Ibuprofen around the clock for three days if prescribed. Use the prescribed narcotic pain reliever as needed.
4. **Apply an ice pack** to your cheeks for the first 24 hours to help lessen the swelling. The ice pack should be applied only for 20 minutes at a time, alternating with 20 minutes off. Swelling will usually increase for 2 to 3 days before it begins to go down. Swelling may take 1 to 2 weeks to completely disappear, and there may be some bruising of the skin, which appears as the swelling lessens.
5. **Do not rinse your mouth or brush your teeth today.** Do not spit. Rinsing and spitting may dislodge the new blood clots, which have formed in your extraction sites. This may cause excessive bleeding, pain, and delay your healing.
6. **Restrict your diet to cold liquids** until the numbness from your anesthesia has completely disappeared. **Do not drink with a straw;** the sucking action may dislodge your blood clots. You may eat a regular diet once the feeling has returned in your mouth. **Soft foods**, which can be easily chewed and swallowed, may be preferred as swelling gets worse. Stay away from seeds, nuts, rice, grits, popcorn, etc. that can get into the extraction sites and cause a problem with healing.
7. Do not drink any **alcoholic beverages** today, or whenever you are taking narcotic-pain medicine. **Do not smoke** for at least the next three days. Smoking will significantly delay healing and increase your pain.

8. If you had an upper tooth removed, do not blow your nose forcibly today and for the next week. Often there is only a thin membrane remaining between the tooth socket and the sinus, and this may be perforated by blowing your nose forcibly until healing has occurred.
9. Do not make important personal or business decisions until tomorrow.

#### The healing process:

1. The day after surgery, **pain and swelling** is usually the worst but should gradually decrease. After 72 hours, if the pain has not lessened or returns this may a sign of a "dry socket" which can feel like throbbing or an earache. If this happens, call the clinic for treatment.
2. **Cleaning your mouth..** Begin to brush your teeth normally the day after surgery, taking care not to disturb the surgical sites. Soak your mouth with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon salt in 1 cup of water) at least after meals and before bedtime until the area has healed. If you have been prescribed a mouth rinse, use the salt water first, and then use the medicated rinse.
3. If you had an IV placed, and there is any redness or swelling at the site, place a warm, moist washcloth over the area for 20 minutes at a time until redness subsides. If the symptoms last more than 2- 3 days, call your dentist.
4. **Sutures (stitches)** may have been placed to help healing. These sutures will dissolve by themselves.
5. **Healing.** If you had a tooth taken out, you will notice a "hole" which you can feel with your tongue. The hole will gradually heal and fill in, so that within approximately 2 weeks it will not be noticeable. Until the site completely heals, the teeth next to it will probably be sensitive to heat and cold.
6. You may **return to full activity**, including work or school, or the items listed above, when you have not taken pain medicine for 24 hours.

#### Follow up care:

Generally, your dentist will want to see you in about one week to make sure the areas are healing well. Check for an appointment time before you leave. \_\_\_\_\_.

**If you have problems, call (706) \_\_\_\_\_.**  
Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.