



Postoperative Instructions for Wisdom Teeth Extractions

It is important that these instructions are followed carefully as they may prevent needless alarm or worry, as well as postoperative complications.

- 1) **NO SMOKING** (48 hours after surgery)
- 2) **NO ALCOHOL**
- 3) **NO SPITTING**
- 4) **NO SUCKING THROUGH A STRAW**
- 5) **NO CARBONATED BEVERAGES (SOFT DRINKS)**
- 6) **AVOID VERY HOT OR SPICY FOODS**
- 7) **NO HEAVY EXERCISE FOR 24 HOURS**
- 8) **IT IS IMPORTANT TO DRINK AND EAT**
- 9) **EXERCISE YOUR LOWER JAW TO AVOID MUSCLE STIFFNESS**
- 10) **IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRUSH AND FLOSS THE ADJACENT TEETH**
- 11) **KEEP YOUR HEAD SLIGHTLY ELEVATED WHEN LYING DOWN**

1. **BLEEDING:** After an extraction, it is important for a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. We are going to make sure that your bleeding is under control before you leave this office. After your surgical procedure, we are going to place a gauze pad over the extraction sites and we ask that you bite on this gauze pad for 1 hour to control bleeding. This gauze pack acts as a pressure dressing to stop the bleeding. If excessive oozing continues after the pack is removed, fold a piece of gauze thick enough to bite on, dampen the gauze, and place it directly on the extraction site. Repeat every 45-60 minutes until the bleeding subsides. **DO NOT SPIT** for this causes more bleeding. If excessive bleeding persists, a warm moist tea bag may be placed on the extraction site. It is normal to have a red tinge to your saliva for one or two days after surgery. This may occur after brushing or eating. You may wake up the morning after surgery with blood on your pillow. To keep the blood clot intact, do not touch it with your tongue, fingers, or any other object.

You are most likely not bleeding as much as you think. You will have a little bit of blood with a lot of saliva. For example, if you take a sink and fill it with water, then place one drop of red food coloring into the sink, everything turns red.

2. EXPECT MODERATE DISCOMFORT, NAUSEA, SWELLING, AND OOZING IN THE IMMEDIATE 24 HOURS FOLLOWING SURGERY. Do not rinse for at least 24 hours. This is to eliminate bleeding and loss of the blood clot. Make sure you eat before taking any pain medication to lessen your chances of nausea. If you have been given Phenergan, a prescription for nausea, take it as directed at least an hour before taking your pain medication.

3. FORCE FLUIDS BY MOUTH. Drink lots of fluids. It is recommended that you drink 8 glasses of water per day. Dehydration hinders healing. Eat only soft nutritious foods (soup, pudding, baked potatoes, jell-o, scrambled eggs) on the day of the extraction. A good appetite and a well balanced diet are essential to rapid healing. You may eat normally the next day or as soon as you feel comfortable.

4. SWELLING: After surgery, you can help reduce swelling by applying an ice bag or cold, moist cloth for 15 minutes on then 15 minutes off of every awakened hour. Slight swelling is considered to be normal. Swelling usually starts to go down after 48 hours. Be sure to not limit the range of motion of your lower jaw as “babying” yourself with jaw opening after surgery. This can lead to your muscles locking in a more closed position.

5. ANTIBIOTICS: If you are prescribed antibiotics, take them until the bottle is gone, even if you feel better. If you are on birth control pills, the antibiotics may render your birth control pills ineffective. It is highly advised to use other means of birth control when taking antibiotics.

6. PAIN: You have been given a local anesthetic that may last up to 12 hours. It is important to begin pain medication when you eat after surgery. This will allow the pain medication to build up in your body. **Do not wait for the local anesthetic to wear off before taking pain medication. In addition, two extra-strength Tylenol taken every 4 hours or 4 tablets of 200mg Ibuprofen (Motrin/ Advil) taken 3 times a day will allay most post-surgical pain.**

7. Limit yourself to calm activities for the first 24 hours after surgery, this keeps your blood pressure lower, reduces bleeding, and helps the healing process.

8. Fainting: Occasionally following surgery a patient may feel weak and faint. This is usually **not** associated with blood loss, but from low blood sugar or rising too rapidly from a prone (recline) position. This can be prevented by getting up slowly and sitting on the side of the bed for a few moments before standing. If you feel faint, drink a small glass of orange juice to elevate your blood sugar.

9. After 24 hours, use ½ teaspoon of salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water for a mouth rinse. This should be done 4-6 times per day for a day or two. Good oral hygiene habits are essential for

healing. Softening the bristles of your toothbrush with hot water may help when brushing. If you are given a pink foam applicator you may use this as a toothbrush substitute

10. **SUTURES:** If sutures have been placed, they will dissolve in 1-2 weeks.

11. **HEALING:** The initial healing period usually lasts 2 weeks. Depending upon your age, it may take months for the extraction site to fill in.

12. **ANESTHETICS:** Before the procedure began, you were given an anesthetic to ensure your comfort during the procedure and shortly after the procedure. The anesthetics we use lasts between 1 and 12 hours. The anesthetic typically leaves your lips, teeth, and tongue feeling numb, tingly, or heavy after the appointment. For this reason, be careful and do not bite your lip or tongue and do not play with them because they feel funny. Biting your lip, cheek, or tongue can lead to some severe discomfort and it may last for days.

13. **EXTRACTION SPACE AND BONE FRAGMENTS:** The space left by the missing tooth will feel a bit strange to you at first. Eventually, new bone and gum tissue will grow into the gap left by the extraction. We are going to make sure we removed every piece of tooth. If however, we cannot remove every piece, we will tell you before you leave the office the day of the extractions appointment. Sometimes it may be necessary to leave a piece of tooth as removing it may cause more serious consequences than leaving it. If you look in your mouth after the extraction appointment and you see something white or feel something hard, it is bone. Do not be alarmed. This piece of bone will eventually be covered by gum tissue or it will fall off on its own. It is possible for bone splinters to work their way out several days, weeks, and months after an extraction.

If you have any questions about these instructions or any difficulty (excessive bleeding, rapid rise in temperature, difficulty breathing) please call us at: (910)480-4890.

It is our desire to have you as comfortable as possible during your healing period. Failure to follow these instructions to the letter may result in increased pain, sensitivity, swelling, and slow down healing process.