

# POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Sometimes, the effects of oral surgery are minimal, in which case some of the following instructions may not be applicable.

Please evaluate your individual needs after surgery and follow these guidelines. For clarification, call our office at **(919) 719-1780** during business hours and (919) 725-1528 after hours.

## DAY OF SURGERY

### GAUZE

You will be given gauze to use at home

- Moisten the gauze with tap water, iced water, or iced tea (the iced water and tea can help slow the bleeding more quickly).
- Place the moistened gauze directly over the surgical site. Bite down with gentle pressure, making sure gauze remains in place.
- **Change the gauze about every hour (as needed)** until bleeding becomes minimal (this may take several hours).
- You may also remove the gauze briefly to eat. Try to minimize the amount of times the gauze is removed.

### BLEEDING

- Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means the gauze is not placed correctly and is not putting enough pressure on the surgical sites.
- Moisten the gauze with the iced water or iced tea to help slow the bleeding.
- Reposition the gauze directly over the surgical sites.
- **Please note:** bleeding will not stop right away, but it should slow down gradually throughout the day. Initially, the gauze will be red then dark pink, and finally light pink.

At this point, the gauze can be removed.

### BE CAREFUL

- Do not disturb the surgical sites or probe the area with anything.
- **Do not rinse vigorously, spit, or use a straw** for at least 24 hours after surgery.
- **Avoid smoking for as long as possible.** It can delay healing and may cause prolonged pain.

### PAIN MANAGEMENT

Oral surgery is normally accompanied by some degree of discomfort. **Pain usually peaks within 3 to 5 days after surgery.**

- The best method of pain and swelling control is using over the counter analgesics. Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) are great products to assist one with postop pain and swelling.
- Pain management is often directed on an individual basis. In general, a combination of ibuprofen and acetaminophen can assist with nearly all postop recovery.
- Taking one/two ibuprofen (200mg, 400mg) with one acetaminophen (325mg or 500mg) every 6 hours is a very potent regimen.
- One can also take 2-3 ibuprofen (400mg or 600mg) every 6 hours, and take one acetaminophen (325mg or 500mg) in between each dose of ibuprofen for effective pain relief. For example: ibuprofen - 12pm, Tylenol - 3pm, ibuprofen - 6pm, Tylenol - 9pm, etc.
- A prescription for an opioid analgesic may be provided and will be directed to be used for breakthrough pain instances. **Do not take a combination opioid prescription medication with Tylenol.**
- If you find you are taking large amounts of medication at frequent intervals, please call.
- If you anticipate needing another prescription for pain medication, please call our office as soon as possible during regular business hours.
- **Opioids require a written prescription to be taken to the pharmacy and may not be called in.**
- Dispose of any unused opioid prescriptions soon after recovery is established.

Grinding tablets into kitty litter or coffee grounds then closing them in a trash bag are effective means of disposal.

### OOZING

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal up to a few days following surgery. Typically, gauze is not needed for light oozing, but may be used if desired.

## SUTURES

Sometimes sutures (stitches) are placed at the surgical site to help minimize postoperative bleeding. The sutures are dissolvable and will usually come out on their own. This can happen the same day as your surgery and is no cause for alarm.

## SWELLING

Swelling usually peaks within 3-5 days after surgery . It can be minimized by using a cold pack, bag of ice, or frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. Ice should be used as much as possible (as long as it is comfortable) for the first 24 hours. Ibuprofen will also help to minimize the swelling. Keep your head elevated when resting for 3-5 days after surgery to help minimize swelling and discomfort.

## NAUSEA

Some patients experience nausea following surgery . This is often due to pain medication and can be reduced by taking medication with some food and water. Sipping slowly on soda or ginger ale may also help alleviate nausea.

## DIET

- While numb, avoid any foods that require chewing.
- Don't eat anything hot for at least 24 hours (warm food is okay).
- Once the numbness has subsided, you can eat nourishing soft foods with comfort.
- It is sometimes advisable, but not always required, to limit the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milkshakes, etc).
- Avoid foods like nuts, seeds, popcorn, etc. for the first week.
- Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods as they become comfortable.
- Do not skip meals! If you eat regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, and heal faster. Stay hydrated! Water and healthy juices are important.
- If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits and follow instructions given to you by your doctor.

## DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY

### MOUTH RINSES

Keeping your mouth as clean as possible after surgery is essential. You may start using salt water rinses the day after surgery . Use 1/4 teaspoon in 8 oz. of warm water to gently rinse. You may repeat as much as you like, but at least 2-3 times per day for the first week or two. If you were given an irrigation syringe, use it daily following the instructions on the next page.

### BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

Return to your normal oral hygiene as soon as possible after surgery (as long as you are no longer numb). Soreness and swelling may not permit normal brushing in all areas, but please make every effort to clean your teeth where comfortable.

### HOT APPLICATIONS

After the first 24hour period of using ice, you use warm compresses instead to help decrease swelling and stiffness and soothe tender areas. However, if ice packs are more comfortable, you may continue to use ice.

### HEALING

Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: Swelling usually peaks in the first 3 to 5 days. Pain will usually peak in the first 3 to 5 days. If your surgery was more difficult, this time period may be extended. The remainder of the postoperative course should be gradual, steady improvement. Most people start feeling considerable improvement 7-10 days after surgery.

We want your recovery to be as smooth and pleasant as possible . Follow these instructions but if you have questions, please call our office. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your questions or concerns. Please Note: Opioid pain medications cannot be called into the pharmacy. Refills must be requested and picked up during regular business hours. There is always a doctor on call for emergencies. Please call the office at (919) 719-1780 during office hours and (919) 725-1528 after hours.

# IRRIGATION INSTRUCTIONS AND SCHEDULE

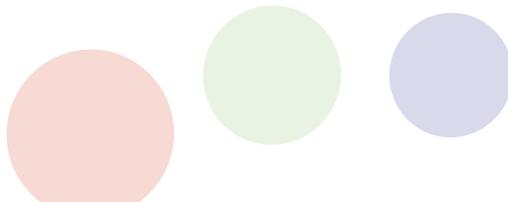
The syringe is used to irrigate the sockets (holes) left behind when a tooth is removed (used mostly for lower sockets, but can be used on the top, if needed). Do not use the syringe for the first four days: See irrigation schedule at the bottom of this page.

To use the syringe, follow the instructions below at least twice a day for 4 to 8 weeks (until the sockets are completely healed):

1. Fill with warm salt water (about 1 teaspoon of salt to 8 oz. of water). Tap water can be used if you cannot tolerate salt water.
2. Pull out your cheek to better see the socket.
3. Place the tip of the syringe just inside the socket and gently press the plunger to squirt the water into the socket with moderate pressure.
4. Repeat as many times as necessary until you no longer see any food/debris coming out of the socket (water is clear).

## PLEASE NOTE:

- A small amount of bleeding is to be expected, even a few weeks out.
- Food inside the sockets can look white or yellow and have a bad smell and taste; this is normal. Sometimes, you may see white tissue around the extraction site—this is the tissue healing. (It's similar to a scab forming on your skin to heal itself after a cut.) Do not pick or try to remove this tissue.



IRRIGATION SCHEDULE	
<b>Surgery Day</b>	<b>Begin Irrigation</b>
Monday	Friday
Tuesday	Saturday
Wednesday	Sunday
Thursday	Monday
Friday	Tuesday



# POST-OPERATIVE DIETARY SUGGESTIONS

A nutritious diet should follow surgery to ensure a speedy recovery. Do not skip meals—proper nutrition aids in the healing process. Just make sure you don't drink anything from a straw or eat anything hard or crunchy. Use your best judgment, and call our office if you have any questions at (919) 719-1780

For the first hour after surgery, stick to cool, clear liquids such as:

<b>Water</b>	<b>Tea</b>	<b>Gatorade</b>	<b>Ginger Ale</b>	<b>Cooled Broth</b>	<b>Soda</b>	<b>Fruit Juice (no pulp)</b>
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For the first hour after surgery, stick to cool, clear liquids such as:

<b>Applesauce</b>	<b>Yogurt</b>
<b>Cottage Cheese</b>	<b>Smoothies</b>
<b>Mashed Bananas</b>	<b>Mashed Avocados or Guacamole</b>
<b>Protein Shakes or Milk Shakes</b>	<b>Custard</b>
<b>Hummus</b>	<b>Ice Cream, Sherbet, or Frozen Yogurt</b>
<b>Jell-O</b>	<b>Fruit or Vegetable Juice</b>
<b>Milk</b>	<b>Pudding</b>

After the first several hours, and through the next several days, you may also include warm, soft foods that require minimal chewing such as:

<b>Vegetables (cooked and mashed)</b>	<b>Spinach (sautéed, creamed, or mashed)</b>
<b>Pancakes</b>	<b>Pasta (cooked very soft)</b>
<b>Nut Butters (peanut, cashew, almond)</b>	<b>Scrambled or Poached Eggs</b>
<b>Well-Cooked Casseroles</b>	<b>Quiche</b>
<b>Fish</b>	<b>Mashed Potatoes</b>
<b>Meatloaf or Meatballs (mashed)</b>	<b>Chicken, Beef, or Vegetable Broth</b>
<b>Soup</b>	<b>Baked Beans</b>
<b>Refried Beans</b>	<b>Oatmeal (honey, syrup, or banana)</b>