

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

We want your recovery to be smooth and as pleasant as possible. Please read and follow the instructions carefully. Sometimes the effects of oral surgery are minimal, in which case some of the following instructions may not be applicable. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your post-operative recovery, please call or text your surgical assistant:

Geizel (919) 201-3045 or Karen (919) 621-2841.

If you believe you are having an emergency, call Dr. Benson at (919) 622-2035

DAY OF SURGERY

GAUZE

- You will be given gauze to use at home.
- Moisten a piece of folded gauze with cool tap water, iced water or iced tea (the ice water or tea can help slow the bleeding more quickly).
- Place the moistened folded gauze directly over the surgical site. Bite down on the gauze with firm, gentle pressure. Your front teeth should not be touching when you bite down if the gauze is properly placed. Make sure the gauze remains in place once you have bitten down.
- **Change the gauze about every hour (as needed) until the bleeding has become minimal. This may take several hours.**
- You may remove the gauze briefly to eat, but please minimize the amount of times the gauze is removed. (Biting on the gauze with firm pressure helps to stop the bleeding.)

Tip: Keep the gauze in until you arrive home. Once home, you may remove the gauze and eat (prior to taking pain medication). Once you have had food and fluids, replace the gauze as instructed. If the patient is asleep, you do not need to wake them every hour to change the gauze. If the bleeding appears to be controlled, and the patient is comfortable, you may wait another hour. A tail (a piece of the gauze sticking out of the mouth) will be needed when the patient is asleep, so that the gauze is easy to pull out if it has shifted out of proper placement and bleeding is not controlled.

BLEEDING

- Bleeding should never be severe. If it is, it usually means the gauze is not placed correctly over the surgical sites and the patient is not biting firmly enough on the gauze. Reposition the gauze.
- Moisten a piece of gauze and place it directly over the surgical site.
- You may use cold, iced water or tea to help slow the bleeding.
- **Please note:** Bleeding will not stop right away. But it should slow down gradually throughout the day. Initially, the gauze will appear bright red, then dark pink, and finally a light pink. When the gauze is light pink, it may be removed.

OOZING

Intermittent bleeding or oozing is normal up to a few days after surgery. Typically, gauze is not needed at this time; however, it may be used if desired. Always moisten the gauze before placing it on the surgical site(s).

SWELLING

Swelling usually peaks 3-5 days after surgery. It can be minimized by applying a cold pack, bag of ice, or frozen peas wrapped in a towel to the cheek adjacent to the surgical site. Ice should be used as much as possible (as long as it is comfortable) for the first 24 hours. For example: 15- 20 minutes on and 15-20 minutes off. Ice is most effective the first 8 hours after surgery. Keep your head elevated when resting for 3-5 days after surgery to help alleviate discomfort and minimize swelling. Ibuprofen will also help minimize swelling.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- Oral surgery is normally accompanied by some degree of discomfort. **Pain usually peaks 3-5 days after surgery.**
- The best method of controlling pain and swelling is to use over-the-counter analgesics. Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) are great products to assist with post-op pain and swelling.

- Pain management is often directed on an individual basis. In general, a combination of ibuprofen and Tylenol can assist in nearly all post-op recovery.
- A prescription for an opioid analgesic may be provided and will be directed for use in breakthrough pain instances. **Do not take Tylenol with an opioid prescription; they may not be used in conjunction with one another.**
- Taking one/two ibuprofen (200mg, 400mg) with one Tylenol (325mg or 500mg) every 6 hours is a very potent and effective regimen.
- Another regimen the patient may take: 2-3 ibuprofen (400mg or 600mg) every 6 hours, and take one Tylenol (325mg or 500mg) in between each dose of ibuprofen for effective pain relief. For example: ibuprofen @ 12 pm, Tylenol @ 3 pm, ibuprofen @ 6 pm, Tylenol @ 9 pm, etc. Keeping a log of times the medications are taken can be helpful.
- If you find you are taking large amounts of medications at frequent intervals, please call.
- **Opioid analgesics require a written prescription to be taken to the pharmacy and may not be called in by phone, text or email.**
- If you anticipate needing another prescription for pain medication, please call your surgical assistant as soon as possible: Geizel (919) 201-3045 or Karen (919) 621-2841.
- 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, is an effective means of disposal.

BE CAREFUL

- Your mouth will be numb for several hours today due to the local anesthetic.
- 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.

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 may happen the same day of surgery and is no cause for alarm.

NAUSEA

Some patients experience nausea following surgery. This is often due to pain medication and can be reduced by taking the medication with some food and water. The patient may also swallow a small amount of blood from the surgical sites which can also cause nausea. Sipping slowly on soda or ginger ale may also alleviate nausea.

DIET

- While numb, avoid any foods that require chewing.
- Do not eat or drink anything hot for at least 24 hours (warm is fine).
- Once the numbness has subsided, you can eat nourishing, soft foods.
- It is sometimes advisable, but not required, to limit your first day's intake to liquids and pureed food (soups, milkshakes, etc.).
- Please see attached dietary suggestions.
- 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 more comfortable.
- It's important not to skip meals! Eating regularly and staying hydrated will help with your recovery. Food and fluids will help you feel better, give you strength, and heal faster.
- If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits and follow any instructions given to you by your primary physician.

DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY

MOUTH RINSES

Keeping your mouth as clean as possible after surgery is essential to healing. You may start gently rinsing with salt water 24 hours after surgery. 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 attached instructions.

Salt rinse: ¼ teaspoon salt in 8 oz. of warm water.

BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

Return to your normal oral hygiene as soon as possible after surgery (as long as you are not numb). Soreness and swelling may not permit brushing in all areas, but please make every effort to clean your teeth where comfortable.

HOT APPLICATIONS

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

HEALING

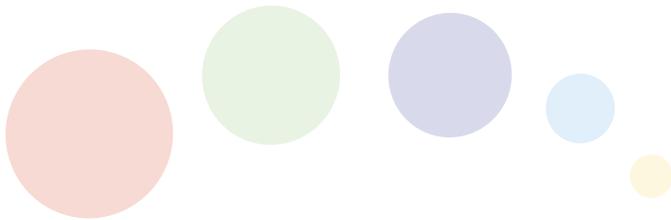
Normal healing should be as follows:

- Swelling peaks in the first 3-5 days.
- Pain usually peaks in the first 3-5 days.
- Overall improvement within 7-10 days.

If your surgery was more difficult, the time period may be extended. Typically though, pain and swelling will peak in 3-5 days and then gradually get better. Most people start to feel considerably better 7-10 days after surgery. You should experience a gradual and steady improvement during the postoperative recovery phase. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your recovery, please feel free to call your surgical assistant.

POSTOPERATIVE FOLLOW-UP

If you have not scheduled a follow-up appointment for 2-3 weeks after your surgery, please call our office to make an appointment: (252) 235-7235.



IRRIGATION INSTRUCTIONS AND SCHEDULE

The syringe provided is to be used to irrigate the sockets (holes) left behind when a tooth is removed. It is mostly used for lower sockets, but it may be used for the upper sockets as well. Do not use the syringe for the first four days.

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

- Fill syringe with warm salt water. Warm tap water may be used if you are unable to tolerate salt water. Salt solution: 1 teaspoon of salt to 8 oz. of warm water.
- Pull your cheek out to better see the socket.
- Place the tip of the syringe just inside the hole and gently press the plunger to squirt the water into the hole to irrigate with moderate pressure.
- Repeat as many times as needed to completely clean the hole of food/debris that has collected inside.
- Please read and follow the irrigation schedule provided:

IRRIGATION SCHEDULE

Surgery Day	Begin Irrigation
Monday	Friday
Tuesday	Saturday
Wednesday	Sunday
Thursday	Monday
Friday	Tuesday

PLEASE NOTE:

- A small amount of bleeding is to be expected and is normal, 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/surgical site; this is the tissue healing. It is similar to a scab forming on your skin after a cut that is healing.
- Do not pick or try to remove the tissue.

PRESCRIPTIONS

- If you are prescribed an oral antibiotic, begin to take that prescription the day after surgery.
- If you are prescribed an oral rinse, begin to use the rinse 2 days after surgery.