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POST OPERATION TOOTH EXTRACTION INSTRUCTIONS

Common sense will often guide you in determining what steps to take; however, if you are unsure, please follow these guidelines or feel free to call our office anytime for clarification. These are general instructions and may be adjusted based on your specific situation.

FIRST HOUR AFTER SURGERY

Bite down firmly, but gently, on the folded gauze pack placed over the surgical site(s). Ensure the gauze stays in place undisturbed for 30 minutes, then replace it with clean gauze. Applying **direct pressure** with the gauze helps control bleeding. If bleeding persists, you may also use a damp, cool black tea bag as an alternative to the gauze.

Please **DO NOT** eat, drink, or sleep with gauze in your mouth.

"If you experience continued heavy bleeding while biting on the gauze, it may be in the wrong position and not applying pressure to the extraction site. Please follow these steps:

1. Remove the gauze.
2. Reposition the gauze or tea bag to ensure pressure is applied directly to the bleeding site.
3. Bite down on the gauze for 30 minutes to 1 hour."

BLEEDING AND OOZING

Some oozing is normal for up to 24 hours and may last longer if you are taking blood thinners. The blood may mix with saliva, so it's important to distinguish between oozing and active bleeding. You can repeat the above steps and discontinue the gauze once the bleeding has subsided. Do not sleep with gauze in your mouth. If excessive bleeding persists, please call the office.

DISCOMFORT

Most oral surgery procedures are accompanied by some degree of discomfort, which typically peaks 2-3 days after the procedure. However, there are effective strategies to help manage this. It is recommended to take a pain reliever **before** the numbness wears off. Over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) and/or acetaminophen (Tylenol®) are generally sufficient, provided there are no allergies, they have been well tolerated in the past, and they do not interfere with any other medications you may be taking.

For more complex procedures, a narcotic may be prescribed. The narcotic can be alternated with or taken in addition to ibuprofen. Taking your medications with food can help reduce the risk of nausea. If you are taking narcotic pain medication, do NOT drive, operate heavy machinery, consume alcohol, or combine it with other sedative medications (such as cold medications, sleeping pills, or muscle relaxants).

SWELLING

Swelling is a normal part of recovery after oral surgery and typically peaks 2-3 days following the procedure. To help minimize facial swelling, keep your head elevated with two pillows when lying down. Applying cold compresses or ice to your face for 30 minutes on, 30 minutes off, every hour during the first 48 hours can also reduce swelling. Be sure to wrap the ice in a light towel to avoid direct contact with your skin. After 48 hours, switch to warm compresses, using the same 30 minutes on, 30 minutes off schedule, until the swelling has subsided.

BRUSHING

Avoid brushing near the surgical sites on the day of surgery, as stitches may be disturbed and there may be some soreness and swelling. Let toothpaste naturally drip out of your mouth on the first day and AVOID forceful spitting. Be sure to brush your teeth at least twice a day after surgery, as maintaining good oral hygiene is important for your recovery.

Resume your normal hygiene routine as soon as possible, but gently brush the areas that feel comfortable.

DO NOT spit, as this action can disrupt the blood clot and may promote bleeding.

RINSING

Avoid rinsing your mouth for 24 hours after surgery, as it may disturb the blood clot. The following day, you may begin gently rinsing with warm (not hot) salt water. Dilute 1 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water and rinse gently 3 to 4 times a day for one week. Allow the rinse to naturally run out of your mouth.

IRRIGATION SYRINGE

If you have been provided with an irrigation syringe, begin using it **one week** after the procedure. Fill the syringe with warm water and gently use it to clean the socket. The socket will gradually close from the bottom. After 3 or 4 weeks, food will no longer get trapped. It is normal to feel a hole after the tooth is removed, but this will heal completely over time as the bone fills in the socket.

ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics may be prescribed to treat or prevent infections. If antibiotics are prescribed, take the medication exactly as directed. If you experience any adverse reactions, such as nausea, rash, or itching, stop taking the medication. Antihistamines (such as Benadryl®) can help alleviate hives, rash, and itching. **Swelling of the lips or tongue, or difficulty breathing**, may indicate a more severe allergic reaction; **seek medical attention immediately**.

If you are using birth control, consider using a back-up method until your next menstrual cycle, as some antibiotics can reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

SUTURES

Sutures may be placed in the surgical area to reduce post-operative bleeding and aid in healing. Occasionally, they may become dislodged, but this is not a cause for concern. Simply remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. The sutures will naturally dissolve on their own within about a week.

REST

Avoid exercising or engaging in strenuous activity that may promote bleeding or increase swelling for 3-4 days following surgery. For patients who have received sedation, **DO NOT** drive, operate heavy machinery, or make important decisions for 24 hours. All children should be closely supervised by an adult for 24 hours following sedation. Most children who undergo simple extractions can return to school and normal activities the next day.

DIET

Be **CAREFUL** when eating and drinking until the local anesthetic has worn off, as you may accidentally spill or bite your lip or tongue. Maintaining a nutritionally balanced diet is very important.

SOFT DIET

During the first 24 hours, your diet should consist of soft foods that are easy to chew and swallow, such as:

- Colas, Ginger Ale, Cottage Cheese, Baby Food (no chunks)
- Milkshakes, Protein/Ensure Shakes, Mashed Potatoes, Scrambled Eggs, Pasta, Soup (lukewarm)
- Yogurt (no chunks of fruit), Jell-O® (no fruit pieces), Milk
- Ice Cream, Sherbet, Frozen Yogurt, Pudding, Custard, Apple Sauce, Homemade Pureed Food

Avoid any foods that contain nuts, seeds, popcorn, rice, corn, or chips.

All food and drink should be consumed chilled/cool until the numbness wears off.

Do not use a straw for 1 week as this may disturb the blood clot and/or promote bleeding.

You may **gradually** progress to solid foods over the next few days. Do not skip meals. Eating nutritious meals regularly will help you feel better, regain strength, reduce discomfort, and promote faster healing.

NAUSEA

Drink a carbonated beverage, such as ginger ale or cola, every 30 minutes until nausea subsides. You may also eat saltine crackers to help alleviate symptoms. If nausea persists, please contact our office.

DRY SOCKET

A dry socket is characterized by constant pain that radiates to other areas of the jaw, teeth, and ear. Symptoms typically do not appear until the third or fourth day after surgery and occur when the blood clot in the socket is lost. This is similar to a scab coming off the skin. The surrounding areas will appear normal. If you do not experience improvement within the first few days following the procedure, please contact our office. A medicated dressing may be needed to alleviate the discomfort.

BRUISING

Bruising may sometimes occur 24 to 48 hours after surgery. Applying warm compresses to the affected area (30 minutes on, 30 minutes off) can help expedite the healing process.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

Avoid smoking or chewing tobacco for at least 1 week after surgery. Do not consume alcohol while taking pain medication and/or antibiotics

SHARP BONY EDGES

If you feel something hard when you place your tongue on the surgical site, it may seem like part of your tooth. However, this is the hard, bony wall that originally supported the tooth. Leave it undisturbed, and it will heal on its own.

OTHER POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

If numbness in the lip, chin, or tongue occurs, there is no cause for alarm. As mentioned before surgery, this is usually temporary. However, be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you may bite it without feeling the sensation.

A slight increase in temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If a fever persists, please notify the office.

Be cautious when going from lying down to standing up. Since you were unable to eat or drink prior to surgery, and fluids may have been difficult to take, combined with the effects of pain medication, you may feel dizzy or lightheaded when standing quickly. Before standing, wait for one minute, then rise slowly.

If the corners of your mouth were stretched during surgery, they may become dry and cracked. It's important to keep your lips moisturized with an ointment like Vaseline.

Sore throats and pain while swallowing are common due to swollen muscles. The usual act of swallowing can become painful, but this discomfort should go away within a few days.

Jaw muscle stiffness may make it difficult to open your mouth for a few days after surgery. This is a normal part of the recovery process and will improve over time.

Our commitment to your care continues after the procedure. If you experience any difficulty at any time, please contact us, and we will be happy to assist you.