

Oral Surgery Post Operative Instructions

Foothill Smiles' Oral Surgery Post Operative Instructions

Most problems that patients face after surgery are related to pain and swelling, bleeding or oozing, dietary difficulties, or medication-related side effects. We have attempted to provide some helpful hints that you may use to minimize any post-surgical difficulties and make your experience as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions, please call our office. 949 587 2800

Bleeding

Bleeding is common to some degree in the first 24 hours. Your bleeding should stop within 4 hours after surgery. Oozing and episodes of occasional bleeding may occur for up to 1–2 weeks, and you should not be alarmed. Usually, simple pressure with a wet, rolled gauze pad over the extraction site will stop the bleeding when applied for about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Remove the gauze after about 1 hour and replace it if the bleeding persists. A tea bag is often more effective in stopping the bleeding. If bleeding persists, the tea bag may be used like a gauze pad. Take the staple out of the tea bag, dampen it, roll it up, and place it over the extraction site. Bite on the bag for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Swelling and Bruising

It is common to swell and bruise. Swelling is usually at its worst 48–72 hours after the surgery, and then it begins to improve. Bruising may occur over a few days and resolve within 2 weeks. Ice helps. Apply ice to your face over the surgical areas for about 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off over the first 24 hours.

Pain

Each person experiences pain in a different way, and what may seem like a minor procedure to one person may be very objectionable to another. Although pain may persist for a few days to some degree, it always seems to get better. If your pain does not improve, you may be developing a dry socket. A dry socket is a condition that may develop when the clot in an extraction site breaks down and leaves behind a painful socket that may need to be treated with medicated gauze in the office. Please call us if you are concerned that you may be experiencing unusual discomfort.

Warm saltwater rinses help muscle stiffness and pain. Mix a ½ teaspoon of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water (as warm as possible without burning yourself). Swish over the extraction site(s) and spit 3–4 times per day for 1 week starting the morning after your surgery. Avoid smoking! Do not use straws, and do not use a Waterpik®. Take over-the-counter ibuprofen (200 mg) every 6 hours for 3–4 days or the prescribed anti-inflammatory medication. Call us if you develop any nausea, stomach cramps, upset stomach, or notice blood in your stool. If you have been prescribed medications by our office. Take this medication as prescribed on that bottle if necessary.

Infection

Continue to take any antibiotics as prescribed. Unusual swelling or discharge may mean that you have an infection. Please note that your healing wound will appear whitish-grey. A slight elevation in temperature after surgery is common in the first 24 hours and does not necessarily signify an infection. Brush your teeth. Your teeth need to be clean to help prevent an infection. Use a toothbrush, softened under warm water, and brush gently around the teeth next to your extraction sites. A little bleeding with brushing is common.

Diet

After your surgery, it will be difficult to eat. Hot, spicy foods and sharp particulate foods are especially difficult to chew and may irritate a wound or tooth socket. Softer, bland foods are the best to eat. Jell-O®, cottage cheese, ice cream, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, soft fish, apple sauce, macaroni and cheese, ground beef in small pieces, yogurt, and well-cooked vegetables are some examples.

You may try more substantial foods as the wounds begin to heal a few days after surgery. Be sure to use care when eating while your mouth is numb. You may expect to be numb from 2 to 12 hours depending on the anesthetic used.

Stitches

We may use dissolving or non-dissolving sutures. The sutures may untie, fall out, or dissolve in a few hours, a few days, or a week. Do not be alarmed by this. We usually remove them at your follow-up visit. They usually do not need to be present for more than a few hours.

Medications

Medications and general anesthetic agents may cause nausea and have undesirable effects. Take your medications with food if they upset your stomach, and please call us if you have any questions.

If you were provided an irrigation syringe because you had your lower wisdom teeth removed, please start using it 5–7 days after surgery.