

## WISDOM TOOTH REMOVAL AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS

The removal of **impacted teeth** is a serious surgical procedure. Postoperative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and complications such as infection and swelling can be minimized if these instructions are followed carefully.

### Immediately Following Surgery

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be kept in place for half an hour. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded.
- Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing and/or touching the wound area following surgery. This may initiate bleeding caused by the dislodgment of the blood clot that has formed.
- Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as possible. If you received general anesthesia, please eat prior to taking medications and drink plenty of water.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.
- Place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for a more thorough explanation.

### Bleeding

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened black tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the black tea helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, call our office for further instructions.

### Swelling

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. Swelling will occur beginning the day after surgery and peak three to four days postoperatively.

However, the swelling may be minimized by using ice packs immediately. Apply two baggies filled with ice—or ice packs—to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left on 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off continuously while you are awake. If swelling or jaw stiffness persists for several days, there is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery.

### Pain

For moderate pain, one extra strength acetaminophen (Extra Strength Tylenol) may be taken every six hours. Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) may be taken instead of Tylenol. Ibuprofen bought over the counter comes in 200 mg tablets. You may take two to three tablets four times daily, but do not exceed 3,200 mg. For individuals under 18, contact our practice for dosing guidance. Do not take the two medications at the same time.

For severe pain, the prescribed medication should be taken as directed. Do not take any of the above medication if you are allergic to them, or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office. Pain and swelling will peak on the 3rd or 4th day and slowly subside after.

### Diet

Only liquids should be consumed after general anesthesia or IV sedation. Drink from a glass and do not use straws for 48 hours. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. A high calorie, high protein intake is very important. Our staff can provide suggested diet instructions. Nourishment should be taken regularly.

Prevent dehydration by consuming fluids regularly. Your food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. Consume at least five to six glasses of fluids, daily. Try not to miss any meals. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort, and heal faster if you continue to eat. Do not eat anything small, hard, or crunchy for three weeks after the procedure (nuts, seeds, rice, chips, etc.).

**CAUTION:** If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position, you may become dizzy. If you are lying down after surgery, make sure you sit up for one minute before standing.

## WISDOM TOOTH REMOVAL AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS (CONT.)

### Keep The Mouth Clean

No rinsing of any kind should be performed until the day following surgery. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least five to six times a day, especially after eating, with a teaspoon of salt mixed into one cup of warm water.

### Discoloration

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal postoperative occurrence, which may occur for two to three days. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

### Antibiotics

If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or any other unfavorable reaction and contact our office immediately. Call the office if you have any questions.

### Nausea and Vomiting

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour, including any prescribed medicines. You should then sip on soda, tea, or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a 15-minute period. When the nausea subsides, you can begin eating solid foods and take the prescribed medicine.

### Other Complications

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As reviewed in your consultation, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation. Call our offices if you have any questions.
- It is not uncommon to experience a slight elevation in temperature immediately following surgery. If the high temperature persists, please notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.
- Be careful when standing up from a reclined position. You could get light-headed from low blood sugar or the medications. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute before getting up.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are the bony walls which support the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed by any of our doctors.
- If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Keep your lips moist with an ointment such as Vaseline.
- Sore throats and pain when swallowing is not uncommon as the muscles are swollen, causing pain when swallowing. This uncomfortable sensation will subside in two to three days.
- Stiffness (trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal postoperative event which will resolve in time. Warm compresses will help with discomfort.

### Other Notes

- Sutures are placed in the area of surgery to minimize postoperative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged. This is no cause for alarm. Sutures will dissolve or fall out on their own.
- The pain and swelling should subside more and more each day following surgery. If your postoperative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur, call our office for instructions.
- There will be a void where the tooth was removed. The void will fill in with new tissue gradually over the next month. In the meantime, the area should be kept clean, especially after meals, with saltwater rinses or a toothbrush for three to four weeks after surgery.
- Your case is unique; no two mouths are alike. Discuss any problems with the trained experts who are best able to effectively help you: the Somerset Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Group or your family dentist.
- Brushing your teeth is okay; be gentle at the surgical sites.
- A dry socket occurs when the blood clot in the tooth socket is prematurely dislodged.
- Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and pain near the ear may occur two to three days following surgery. Call the office if this occurs.
- If you are involved in regular exercise, be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get light-headed, do not exercise. Do not exercise for the first week after surgery.