

**Postoperative Instructions**  
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**Board Certified Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon**

Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. For best healing, follow these guidelines:

**THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS MAY OCCUR-ALL ARE CONSIDERED NORMAL:**

- Some oozing/bleeding: for the first 12-24 hours.
- Swelling: This is normal following a surgical procedure in the mouth. It should reach its maximum in two-to-three days and should begin to diminish by the fifth postoperative day.
- Discomfort/Pain: The most discomfort that you will experience may occur for a few hours after the sensation returns to your mouth. It may gradually increase again for 2-3 days, and then begin to diminish over the next few days.
- Ear ache
- Trismus: difficulty opening the mouth.
- Numbness on the side of the mouth where surgery was performed.
- Bruising or discoloration of the skin/oral mucosa may occur as a result of this surgical procedure.
- Nausea/Vomiting: related to IV sedation drugs or pain medication.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DAY OF THE SURGERY:**

- **FIRST HOUR:** Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first 30 minutes unless the bleeding is not controlled.

Do not spit. Bleeding is controlled by pressure and it is important to remember that intermittent bleeding or oozing is to be expected. If active bleeding persists, replace enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30-45 minutes. The gauze packs may be changed twice (typically every 30 to 45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with a small quantity of peroxide (for wound cleaning).

- **PERSISTENT BLEEDING:** Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs as described above. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy, you may **substitute the gauze by a tea bag** (soaked in very hot water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.
- **SWELLING:** Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized using a cold pack or ice bag wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek/jaw adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off particularly during the first 24 hours after surgery and also during the second and third day after surgery but less frequently.
- **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** Immediately following surgery you should go home and lie down with your head elevated and rest! Keeping your head elevated and minimizing physical activity may help to decrease postoperative swelling and discomfort. Do not drive for 24 hours after being sedated. Avoid driving (especially long distances) when taking narcotics.
- **MEDICATIONS:** Be certain to take all medications as prescribed.

Pain pills: Pain medication should not be taken on an empty stomach and they may cause drowsiness and nausea. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off. If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, you must call for a refill during weekday, business hours.

Antibiotics: If antibiotics have been prescribed, be sure to take all the medications at the exact hours. If you are currently using birth control pills (oral contraceptives) to prevent pregnancy, you should be aware that these

antibiotics may make you BCP ineffective; therefore you should rely on alternative birth control methods while taking these medications.

**Nausea:** Nausea is not uncommon after surgery particularly with IV sedation. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large volume of water can reduce nausea. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better or if nausea is combined with vomiting. Classic Coca Cola may help with nausea.

- **DIET:** It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.). Eat any nourishing food that can be eaten with comfort. It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Avoid extremely hot foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.
- **ORAL HYGIENE:** Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do **NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may rinse (do not swish) with salty water and brush your teeth gently.
- **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since this is very detrimental to healing and may cause dry socket. Ideally avoid smoking and alcoholic beverage during the complete healing process.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS**

- **MOUTH RINSES:** Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water (or prescribed rinse) and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily.
- **BRUSHING:** Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.
- **WARM COMPRESSES:** You may apply warm, moist compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas after the third post-operative day. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.
- **SHARP EDGES:** If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls, which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally, small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.
- Avoid any strenuous activity such as, lifting weights, running, hiking, football, etc.

**HEALING:** Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. **The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement.** If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, **DO NOT** use it for the first three days. Then use it daily according to the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

#### **CONTACT US:**

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office where you had surgery:  
512-280-1216\_or Dr. Lopez 210-606-3636

**CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IN CASE OF: SEVERE PAIN, TROUBLE BREATHING, SEVERE NAUSEA/VOMITING, SEVERE BLEEDING, OR NEW SWELLING WHICH BEGINS 3 DAYS OR MORE AFTER SURGERY**

