

Post-Operative Instructions

Following any surgical procedure, the post-operative care is an essential part of uncomplicated healing. It is important to follow these instructions as they may prevent post-surgical complications.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY:

Discomfort, nausea, swelling, and minor bleeding are all to be expected for the first 24-48 hours. However if SEVERE pain, bleeding, vomiting or other serious concerns arise, please contact us for assistance.

SEDATION/GENERAL ANESTHESIA:

If I.V. or oral sedation was used for the procedure, you must be observed by an adult for 24 hours. The patient cannot drive or operate machinery for 24 hours; operating a vehicle is criminal. Do not make any legal decisions or sign legal documents for 24 hours.

DISCOMFORT:

You may be prescribed a pain medication. Begin taking the medication as directed before the local anesthesia wears off. Most prescription pain medications can cause drowsiness and impair the ability to drive or operate machinery. Do not engage in any dangerous activities while taking the medication.

NAUSEA/VOMITING:

Nausea or vomiting may occur in some patients following anesthesia or surgery. If it becomes severe please contact us for assistance.

BLEEDING:

It is normal to have bleeding until a blood clot forms in the extraction site. Gauze pads may be placed over the surgical areas to apply pressure and control bleeding. In general, pads should be placed and pressure applied for 30-60 minutes at a time until they are saturated. Changing the gauze too frequently may actually encourage bleeding by acting as a sponge rather than helping a clot to form. Continue using the gauze until the bleeding has stopped or slowed to a minimum. Typically the gauze will not be needed after the first 24 hours. A moist tea bag can also be used to control bleeding (the tannic acid in the tea constricts the blood vessels). Occasionally a bloody nose may occur if you had an upper molar removed, an implant placed in the upper jaw, or a sinus lift procedure.

DIET:

Dehydration and poor nutrition impair healing, so it is important to encourage food and water. A soft diet which does not require chewing is best for the first 24-48 hours. You may gradually return to a normal diet as tolerated. It is important to NOT use straws for the first 48-72 hours to prevent disturbing the developing blood clot. Sucking out the blood clots may lead to a painful "dry socket". Also be very careful to avoid chewing and eating hot foods or liquids until the numbness has completely resolved to avoid burning or injuring yourself.

ORAL CARE:

It is important to NOT rinse your mouth, spit, use straws, smoke, or drink alcohol during the first 48-72 hours. These things may disturb the blood clot forming in the extraction sites. After the first 48-72 hours you may begin rinsing with salt water and using the irrigating syringe (if provided) to clean out the surgical areas. You may also brush your teeth taking care to be gentle at the surgical sites. If you were prescribed a medicated mouth rinse, use as directed.

SWELLING:

Swelling may occur following your surgery, typically peaking at 48 hours then slowly decreasing. Ice bags used 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for the first 48 hours may provide some benefit. Also keeping your head elevated may help. If the swelling continues or becomes increasingly painful, red, or hot, contact us for assistance.

STITCHES:

Generally, dissolving sutures are used and will come out on their own in several days. However, if other stitches, staples or packings are placed you will need to return as directed for removal.

SWIMMING:

Do not swim for at least one week following your procedure. Ocean or pool water may contribute to a "dry socket" or an infection.

DENTURES:

If you had complete dentures inserted immediately after extractions, do not remove them. If they are removed, swelling may prevent them from being re-inserted. You should make a follow-up appointment with your referring dentist within 24 hours after your procedure for an adjustment. If you need our assistance please let us know.

AFTER HOURS:

Office hours are 8am-5pm Monday through Friday. If you have general questions please call during office hours. After hours the phone will be attended by a service. If you have an emergency, the service can assist you with contacting the doctor. Please leave a message and the doctor will return your call as soon as possible. If you are having a SERIOUS emergency proceed to the emergency room.

NOTICE: Prescriptions will NOT be ordered or refilled after hours, on weekends, or holidays. Please contact us during office hours with all medication related requests.

WARNING PATIENTS ON BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

Some antibiotics and other medications have been shown to decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills. Ask your physician or pharmacist about your medications. We advise that you use additional birth control measures during the cycle for which you have been prescribed these medications.