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General Dentistry

Fellow Academy of General Dentistry

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Care of the mouth following extractions is very important for proper healing. Each person responds differently from another. Similar procedures on one side of the mouth may vary greatly from the other side as to post-operative discomfort, swelling, bleeding, and duration necessary for healing. Following these instructions will speed the healing process and reduce pain, swelling, and bleeding.

FOOD

1. You may drink cool liquids as soon as you get home. Try to drink 8 to 12 glasses of liquid a day since your solid food intake will probably be less than normal.
2. **DO NOT** drink hot (warm is ok) liquids for the first 24 hours.
3. **DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES!!!** Alcohol and drugs do not mix. Alcohol also increases the possibility of prolonged bleeding and healing.
4. **LIQUID diet until morning.** Examples: juices, pop, ice cream, yogurt, pudding, popsicles, soup, custard, milk, etc.
5. **SOFT diet for two days.** Examples: eggs, cottage cheese, mashed potatoes, ground meats, applesauce, etc.
6. Try not to chew until your numbness has subsided.

GENERAL CARE:

1. **DO NOT USE STRAWS.** Suction from straws may open the wound and prevent healing.
2. **NO SPITTING** for the same reasons.
3. **NO SMOKING FOR THE FIRST 24 HOURS AFTER SURGERY.** Again, suction from the act of smoking can open the wound and prevent healing.
4. Keep gauze packs firmly in position for 1/2 hour, or until saturated. Use gauze pads with biting pressure, changing when saturated, for 2 or 3 hours after surgery.
5. Apply ice packs to the side of your face in the area of surgery for the next 48 hours (20 minutes on, then 20 minutes off). AFTER 48 hours, you may apply a heating pad to your face to help reduce the swelling that might be present.
6. Before the injections wear off (in about one or two hours), it is advised that you start your medications. Always take medications WITH food unless advised differently!
7. **DO NOT RINSE THE MOUTH for 24 hours following surgery.** Beginning the NEXT day, rinse the mouth **gently** with warm salt water (1 teaspoon salt in 8 oz. of warm water). Continue this 4-5 times a day for a week.
8. Get plenty of rest (8-10 hours a night). For the first 48 hours, keep your head elevated when lying down.
9. You may brush your teeth, avoiding the surgical sites. **DO NOT PROBE** operative tissue or pick at clots or sutures.

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THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- 1) Blood tinged saliva can be expected during the first 24 hours. Periodic blood tinged saliva can be seen during the week following surgery, especially when eating and brushing teeth.
- 2) There may be swelling for up to 7 days. The swelling should begin to subside by the end of the 5th day. Swelling will be greater upon arising in the morning each day. You may also experience some facial bruising. This can all be helped with a heating pad on the area for one hour a few times daily.
- 3) Inability to open mouth wide is normal for 4 to 5 days past surgery (sometimes even longer).

COMPLICATIONS:

The following are regarded as complications, and you should contact me as soon as possible if any appear:

- 1) Uncontrolled pain or if pain is not improved after 36 hours.
- 2) Marked temperature rise.
- 3) Inability to open mouth one week past surgery.
- 4) Swelling that persists past the 5th day or suddenly occurs several days after surgery.

SEVERE BLEEDING:

If bleeding becomes excessive, thick, and bright red, use a damp gauze pad and place biting pressure over bleeding point for one hour steadily. Should this fail, use a warm wet tea bag over the area with biting pressure as directed above. Should both methods fail within 4 hours, contact the office/answering service.

CAUTION:

DO NOT DRIVE OR OPERATE HEAVY EQUIPMENT ON THE DAY OF SURGERY AND FOR AS LONG AS YOU ARE TAKING MEDICATION!

Please call my office for any questions or problems you may encounter. If questions or problems arise AFTER office hours, simply dial my office number, and my answering system will direct you on contacting me.