

## **Post-Operative Care for Wisdom Tooth Removal**

### **Immediately After Surgery**

- Keep the gauze pad over the surgical site for 30 minutes, then discard it.
- Avoid vigorous rinsing or touching the surgical area, as this may disturb the blood clot and cause bleeding.
- Take your prescribed pain medication as soon as you start feeling discomfort, which will likely coincide with the local anesthetic wearing off.
- Rest on the day of the surgery and only resume normal activities when you feel comfortable.
- Apply ice packs to the sides of your face where the surgery was performed

### **Bleeding**

- Some bleeding or oozing in the saliva is normal. If the bleeding is heavy, rinse or wipe away old clots, then place a gauze pad on the area and bite down firmly for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary. If the bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for 30 minutes to help form a clot. To reduce further bleeding, stay calm, keep your head elevated, and avoid exercise. Contact the office if bleeding doesn't stop.

### **Swelling**

- Swelling is common and usually occurs around the mouth, cheeks, and face. It will become noticeable the day after surgery and peak 2-3 days later. Ice packs should be applied continuously while awake for the first 36 hours to minimize swelling. After 36 hours, switch to moist heat to reduce swelling. Don't worry if the swelling and jaw stiffness last a few days—it's a normal part of healing.
- You may notice bruising (black, blue, green, or yellow) around your face. This is normal and may appear 2-3 days after surgery as blood spreads under the skin. Applying moist heat can help speed up the healing of the discoloration.

### **Pain**

- For mild pain, take 1-2 Tylenol or 1 Extra Strength Tylenol every 3-4 hours, or 2-4 ibuprofen (200 mg) every 3-4 hours.
- For stronger pain, take the prescribed narcotic medication as directed. Avoid alcohol and operating vehicles or machinery while on this medication. If pain continues, contact the office.

### **Diet**

- After surgery, stick to liquids initially, and avoid using straws and spitting as the suction can dislodge blood clots. Once you're ready, eat soft foods, chewing away from the surgical site. Focus on high-protein, high-calorie foods to promote healing. Make sure to drink plenty of fluids (at least 5-6 glasses a day) and don't skip meals, as nourishment will help you heal faster and feel better. If you feel dizzy after standing, sit for a minute before standing up.

### **Oral Hygiene**

- Don't rinse your mouth until the day after surgery. You can gently brush your teeth the night of the surgery, but rinse with care. From the day after surgery, gently rinse 5-6 times a day with

warm salt water, especially after eating.

### **Antibiotics**

- If prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed to help prevent infection. If you develop a rash or other side effects, stop taking them and contact the office.

### **Nausea and Vomiting**

- If you experience nausea or vomiting, don't take anything by mouth for at least an hour, including medications. After that, sip on clear fluids like ginger ale or tea slowly over 15 minutes. Once the nausea subsides, you can resume eating and taking your medications.

### **Other Complications**

- Temporary numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue is normal and usually goes away over time. Be cautious as you may not feel sensations in these areas, so be careful not to bite yourself.
- A slight fever right after surgery is common. If the fever persists, call the office. Use Tylenol or ibuprofen to reduce the fever.
- You may feel hard bumps in your mouth, which are the bony walls that previously supported the tooth. These usually smooth out by themselves, but if they don't, your dentist can remove them.
- Dry, cracked lips are common from the corners of the mouth stretching. Use Vaseline or another moisturizing ointment to keep them moist.
- Sore throat and difficulty swallowing are often caused by swelling of the muscles and should improve in 2-3 days.
- Jaw stiffness (Trismus) may make it hard to open your mouth for a few days. This is normal and should gradually resolve.

### **Sutures**

- Stitches are placed to help control bleeding and promote healing. If they fall out, don't worry; just discard them. Sutures can be removed about a week after surgery.

### **Aftercare and Additional Notes**

- The pain and swelling should gradually decrease each day after surgery. If they worsen or you experience unusual symptoms, contact the office for advice.
- There will be a cavity where the tooth was removed, and it will fill in with new tissue over the next month. Keep the area clean, especially after meals, by rinsing with salt water or gently brushing with a toothbrush.
- A dry socket occurs when the blood clot becomes dislodged from the socket, causing pain that may radiate to the ear. If this happens 2-3 days after surgery, contact the office.
- If you're regularly active, be aware that reduced food intake may leave you feeling weak, so stop exercising if you feel lightheaded.