

Care Following Extractions

BLEEDING :

Bite with **firm pressure** on gauze placed over the surgical area/extraction site for 1-2 hours. The surgical area for wisdom teeth is behind the teeth as far back in the cheek as possible; Do not chew on or constantly change the gauze. Replace gauze when it becomes completely saturated with blood. If bleeding continues, bite on a fresh gauze for an additional hour. If bleeding continues, bite firmly (for 1 hour) on a tea bag which has been moistened and wrapped in a gauze. If active bleeding continues, contact your doctor. You will notice a normal oozing of blood (for 24-48 hours) after surgery.

SWELLING :

The surgical area and face are expected to swell and occasionally bruise; this is normal. Swelling and bleeding can be minimized by applying an ice pack to your face over the surgical area. Apply it for 30 minutes on one side (surgical area), then switch the ice pack to any other surgical area for 30 minutes; alternating sides for the first 12 hours after surgery. **After the first day, do NOT use ice anymore.** Elevate your head with extra pillows for the first 48 hours after surgery. This will help reduce your swelling and bleeding. The swelling should reach its maximum by the 3rd day after surgery. **Starting the 3rd day after surgery**, an electric (moist) **heating pad** (on medium heat setting) applied to the face over the surgical area as often as possible (alternating sides as instructed for the ice packs for more than one surgical area) **will hasten the healing.** Using heat in this manner will improve your healing tremendously. **Continue using the heating pad in this manner for at least 8 weeks.**

PAIN :

It is normal to experience some discomfort after surgery. It is normal for your discomfort to increase on about the 3rd day after surgery. Your discomfort may last several weeks following surgery. Pain medications will be given to you to control and decrease your pain. However no medication will alleviate all of your discomfort. Some of the medications given and prescribed will cause drowsiness. **Do not drive or operate machinery** after your surgery or after taking your prescribed pain medications, because they will slow your responses. If you were given Ibuprofen, start this medication before your numbness wears off. You can start the other pain medication when the numbness starts to wear off. If pain of **increasing** intensity begins to return 5-6 days after surgery, it could mean that a "dry socket" or an infection is developing and you should contact Dr. Snyder as soon as possible for advice and treatment.

ORAL HYGIENE :

Brush your teeth gently but thoroughly using a soft toothbrush and then rinse your mouth for 60 seconds with a dilute hydrogen peroxide solution (1 part hydrogen peroxide with 3 parts water) **at least 4 to 6 times each day** (after each time you eat and before going to bed). This is **very important** for preventing an infection. **Continue these rinses for a least 8 weeks.** If you have sutures, they will dissolve on their own.

DIET :

For 24 hours after surgery, it is best to take only clear liquids (liquids you can read newspaper print through, like apple or cranberry juice or Jell-O). However, If you are very hungry, you may eat a soft diet (as long as you rinse your mouth well after eating). **Do not drink through a straw for 2 weeks.** Drink plenty of liquids (at least 10 full glasses a day). After the first 24 hours, you may be more comfortable if you eat a soft diet for a few days before resuming a normal diet when you can chew comfortably. Do not eat hard foods like chips for 4 weeks. Do not drink alcoholic beverages for at least 1 week. A daily multivitamin with zinc (like "Centrum") would be helpful to supplement your diet for several weeks during your healing.

SMOKING :

Do not smoke for at least 2 weeks after surgery. Smoking will cause a "Dry Socket" (clot disintegration) resulting in severe pain.

We strongly encourage that a responsible adult be with you the first 24 hours after surgery. You may resume your normal activities the day after your procedure. Base your activities on how you feel.

If questions arise, call Dr. Snyder at (704) 865-0081. If you have prolonged/severe bleeding, swelling or pain, call Dr. Snyder immediately. Dr. Snyder has an answering service that can reach him when the office is closed.