

HOME CARE FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY

PAIN:

Discomfort is to be expected following surgery. Take the prescribed medications as indicated, and they should provide relief. If they are not working, or your prescription has run out, call the office. Many of the pain medications can cause stomach upset, so they are best taken with a small amount of food. Normally pain becomes less severe with each passing post-operative day. Renewed pain three or four days later, severe enough to interrupt sleep may indicate a healing problem. You should call the office if there are any problems.

BLEEDING:

Bleeding can be controlled by placing gauze directly over the extraction socket and biting with firm pressure for 1 hour. This procedure can be repeated several times if necessary. Try to elevate the head and minimize talking and physical activity if bleeding is persisting. For troublesome bleeding, a moist tea bag may be used as a pack over the socket should this fail, contact the office. Avoid spitting and rinsing for the first 24 hours. It is normal for the saliva to be blood streaked for a day or so.

SWELLING:

Swelling is quite common and a perfectly normal occurrence following surgery and normally peaks by the second or third day. Ice packs placed on the outside of the face for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off during the first 24 hours will help to limit the swelling. Also to minimize swelling, elevate head on pillows for the first 3 days to help prevent pooling of fluids and promote drainage. Do not lie flat when sleeping at night. After the third day, apply heat to the sides of the face, massage the cheek area gently, and exercise the jaw by opening and closing the mouth, 2 to 3 times a day to help reduce muscle stiffness.

INFECTION:

Infections are quite common following oral surgery procedures. Should you develop a persistent fever or pain that is unresponsive to medications, call the office. If antibiotics prescribed, they should be taken as directed.

DIFFICULTY OPENING THE MOUTH:

This is normal following the removal of teeth, it will return to normal as the swelling subsides.

BRUISING OF SKIN:

Bruising is more common in fair skinned persons and in older patients. It may occur on the face near the area of the surgery or on the arm in the area of the intravenous injection site. The arm may also be tender along the site of the intravenous injection site. This is usually due to a mild inflammation of the blood vessel.

NUTRITION:

Begin immediately upon arrival at home. Start with clear fluids, such as apple juice, pop, broth, jello, etc. By later on the day of surgery or the next day, heavier fluids with some milk content in them, such as puddings, cream soups, etc., or soft foods may be started. These soft foods may be the consistency of fresh pasta, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, etc., but most importantly, must contain plenty of nutritional value. Return to a regular diet as soon as it can be tolerated. Maintain your fluid balance by drinking at least 8 cups of fluid a day.

ORAL HYGIENE:

Do not rinse mouth or spit for the first 24 hours following surgery. After 24 hours, begin rinsing mouth with warm, slightly salty water (1/2 tsp salt to 1 cup warm water) approximately 10 times daily and resume normal tooth brushing gently. **Do not smoke during the day of surgery and avoid smoking for at least 24 hours** or more following surgery. Do not use a straw to drink fluids.

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