

Patient Care Following Dental Surgery

To ensure rapid healing and to avoid complications that could be both harmful and uncomfortable, please follow these instructions carefully.

Bleeding – Normal oozing may occur for up to 24 hours or more following surgery. Bleeding usually can be controlled by gentle, steady biting pressure on the gauze pads placed over the surgery site (s). Pressure should be continued for 2 hours as instructed or until most of the bleeding has stopped. Do not change the pads since this disturbs the clot and inhibits healing. Continued or excessive bleeding is usually controlled by gentle biting pressure on a moistened tea bag (not herbal tea) over the surgical area. If bleeding is not controlled within 2 hours, call this office or go to an Emergency Room for observation.

Immediate Dentures – **Do not remove the dentures for the first 24 hours!** Dr. Wirtz will remove and adjust the dentures during your 24-hour postop appointment. Pressure on the denture helps control bleeding and swelling. If removed, swelling may prevent replacement of the denture for 7-10 days.

Medications – Continue all medications as prescribed. Take pain medication when you first start to feel discomfort. Note that taking some antibiotics can temporarily nullify the effects of oral contraceptives.

Diet – It is important to maintain good nutrition following surgery. Eat a soft diet the day of surgery. Avoid very hot foods or drinks. Drink plenty of fluids, but do not drink through a straw – the negative pressure could disturb the clot. Nutritional supplements such as Ensure or Gatorade are recommended as well as multi-vitamins.

Swelling – Swelling and bruising are common after surgery. Cold packs (frozen peas) should be applied to the face adjacent to the surgery area. Apply cold packs for 20 minutes on / 20 minutes off until bedtime. Significant swelling beyond 48 hours could indicate infection. If this occurs, call this office or seek immediate medical care for evaluation and/or medication. Muscle soreness and difficulty opening the jaws is common after extractions. Moist heat after 36 hours will help relieve muscle soreness.

Oral Care – **No rinsing, no alcohol and no smoking** for at least **24 hours** following surgery. After 24 hours, rinse with an antibacterial mouthwash and/or warm saline (½ teaspoon of table salt in 8 oz. water) 5 times per day for the next 3 days. Brush and floss as normal while avoiding the surgical areas.

Activity – Rest today and keep your head slightly elevated. Do not engage in strenuous physical activity for the first 48 hours. With extractions, your jaw may be weaker than before surgery. For that reason, you should not chew forcefully or participate in contact sports for 5-6 weeks.

Unforeseen Complications – If you suspect any problems with healing or experience fever or difficulty swallowing, please contact this office and/or seek immediate medical attention.