

Aftercare Instructions: Wisdom Tooth Removal

The removal of impacted teeth is a serious surgical procedure. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

Immediately following surgery:

- Bite on the gauze pad placed over the surgical site for 30 minutes. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded and replaced by another gauze pad. Refer to the section on BLEEDING for specific details.
- Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery. This may initiate bleeding causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- To minimize any swelling, place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section swelling for explanation.
- Take prescribed pain medication as soon as you can so it is digested before the local anaesthetic has worn off. Having something of substance in the stomach to coat the stomach will help minimize nausea from the pain medications. Refer to the section on pain for specific details.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable. If you are active, your heart will be beating harder and you can expect excessive bleeding and throbbing from the wound.
- **NO SMOKING UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Bleeding:

- A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. On the skin where the surface is dry, bleeding clots in 10 minutes. In the mouth where things are wet, it takes 6-8 hours for the clot to gel up and the bleeding to subside. Slight bleeding or oozing causing redness in the saliva is very common. For this reason, the gauze will always appear red when it is removed. Saliva washes over the blood clots and dyes the gauze red even after bleeding from the sockets has actually stopped.
- Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first gently rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for sixty minutes. Repeat necessary.
- If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a blood clot by contracting bleeding vessels. This can be repeated several times.
- To minimize further bleeding, sit upright, do not become excited, and maintain constant pressure on the gauze (no talking or chewing) and avoiding exercise.
- If bleeding does not subside after 6-8 hours call the surgery for further instructions (01296 434848).

Swelling:

- The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. There is usually a fair amount of the cheek retraction involved with the removal of impacted wisdom teeth. Therefore, you should expect swelling of the cheek after your surgery.
- The swelling will not become apparent until the following day and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively.
- The swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Sealed plastic bags filled with ice, ice packs or a frozen bag of peas wrapped in a wash cloth should be applied to the side of the face where surgery was performed.
- The ice packs should be applied within 20 minutes on/20 minutes off for the afternoon and evening immediately following your extraction. After 24 hours ice has no beneficial effect.
- Thirty-six hours (36) following surgery the application of moist heat to the side of the face may help some in reducing the size any swelling that has formed.
- If swelling of the jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. Soft, puffy swelling that you can indent with your finger after oral surgery is very normal.
- Bright red, rock hard, hot swelling that does not indent with finger pressure which is getting bigger by the hour would suggest infection. This usually would develop around 3-4 days after surgery, when you would expect swelling to be going down, not up. If this should occur, please call our surgery (01296 434 848).

Temperature:

- It is normal to run a low grade temperature (99 -100f) for 7-10 days following oral surgery. This reflects your immune response to the normal bacteria that are present in your mouth. A high temperature (>101f) might exist for 6-8 hours after surgery but no more than that.
- Two paracetamol tablets or 2-4 ibuprofen every 4-6 hours will help moderate a temperature.
- A temperature >101F several days after surgery especially if accompanied by the rock hard swelling and increased pain, is usually indicative of infection. You should call the surgery for instructions if this should occur.

Bruising:

- When the bone requires smoothing to allow for the fit of the denture, there is a good chance there will be some bruising on the surface skin over the area. The most common location is over the upper eye teeth (on the cheek below the eye).
- Bruising may not be obvious for a day or two. By the time it reaches the surface it may have already turned from purple to green to yellow in colour.
- Over several days the yellow colour will settle down the neck to about the nipple line of the chest before it disappears

Pain:

- Pain or discomfort following surgery is expected to last 4-5 days. For many patients, it seems the third and fourth day may require more pain medicine than the first and second day. Following the fourth day pain should subside more and more each day.
- Many medications for pain can cause nausea or vomiting. It is wise to have something of substance in the stomach (yogurt, ice cream, pudding ect) before taking prescription medicine/ over the counter medicines (aspirin/ibuprofen). Even coating the stomach with pepto bismol or milk of magnesia can help prevent or moderate nausea.
- For moderate pain one or two tablets of paracetamol or extra strength paracetamol may be taken every 3-4to hours or ibuprofen two –four 200mg tablets to be taken 3-4 hours.
- DO NOT DRIVE AN AUTOMOBILE OR WORK AROUND OR OPERATE HEAVY MACHINERY IF YOU ARE TAKING PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICINE.
- Alcohol and prescription medicines do NOT mix!
- If prescription pain medications are required beyond 4 days, further treatment may be indicated, please call the surgery and discuss your situation with us. (01296 434 848)

Antibiotics:

- Antibiotics are NOT given as a routine procedure after oral surgery. The overuse of antibiotics leading to the development of resistant bacteria is well documented so careful consideration is given to each circumstance when deciding whether antibiotics are necessary. In specific circumstances, antibiotics will be given to help prevent infection or treat an existing infection.
- If you have been placed on antibiotics take the tablets or liquid as directed. You should take them on schedule until they are completely gone.
- Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavourable reaction. You should call the surgery (01296 434848) to report any such finding or if you have any questions.

Diet:

- Drink plenty of fluids. Try to drink 5-6 eight ounce glasses first day.
- Drink from a glass or cup and don't use a straw. The sucking motion out the healing blood clot and start bleeding again.
- Avoid hot liquids or food while you are numb so you don't burn yourself.
- soft foods and liquids can be eaten on the day of surgery. The act of chewing doesn't damage anything, but you should avoid chewing sharp or hard objects at the surgical site for several days
- Returning to a normal diet as soon as possible unless otherwise directed. You will find eating multiple small meals is easier than three regular meals for the first few days
- You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat.

- If you suddenly sit up or stand up from a lying position you may become dizzy. Therefore, immediately following surgery, if you are lying down make sure you sit for one minute before standing.

Oral Hygiene:

- good oral hygiene is essential to proper healing of any oral surgery site.
- you can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse very gently. Vigorous rinsing should be avoided until the next day following surgery.
- The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 5-6 times a day especially after eating. Salt water (cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt) is ideal but plain water is also ok.
- Mouthwash has an alcohol base to it so it may be pretty 'zingy' when it comes in contact with fresh oral wounds. After a few days, dilute the mouth wash in the half with tap water and rinse out your mouth. This will make it taste and smell better, you can gradually build up to full strength mouthwash as you more comfortable.

Smoking:

- NO smoking for 48 hours after surgery. Smoking retards healing dramatically. Nicotine constricts blood vessels which slows the formation and expansion of the healing blood clot in the socket. This leads to painful complication called 'Dry socket'.
- After 48 hours, if you feel you need so much as one paracetamol or aspirin to control pain you should avoid any smoking of any kind. This usually reflects that the clot has not grown enough to cover all the exposed bone in the socket. The exposed bone is filled with raw nerve endings. Until the nerve endings are covered with a healthy blood clot, they will cause pain. Smoking will just slow down this process significantly, and make the pain even worse.
- Therefore, if there is any question about smoking... **DONT DO IT!**

Activity:

- You should keep physical activities to a minimum for 6-12 hours following surgery.
- If you are considering exercise, throbbing or bleeding may occur. If this occurs you should discontinue exercising.
- Keep in mind that you are probably not taking normal nourishment. This may weaken you and further limit your ability to exercise.

Nausea and vomiting:

- In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine.

- You should then sip on coke, tea or ginger ale. Avoid milk products. You should sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period.
- Before you resume talking any medicine always try to coat the stomach with something of substance. (pepto bismol or milk of magnesia) may help get the nausea to subside.
- If nausea /vomiting persists after 12 hours, please call the surgery (01296 434848) to help resolve the problem.

Other complications:

- If numbness of the lip, chin or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if you lip or tongue is numb you could bite it and not feel it so be careful. Call our surgery, if you have any questions about this.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are bony walls which supported the tooth (the walls of the tooth socket. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. You may not notice this for days to weeks after surgery. If the rough edges bother your tongue or cheeks, Call the surgery so we can evaluate the area and smooth them down for you.
- If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with and ointment such as Vaseline.
- Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful this will subside in 2-3 days.
- Stiffness (Trimus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for 7-10 days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event which resolves in time. The muscles that operate the jaw are not used to holding open for prolonged times (like gardening for the first time in spring). The physical therapy of eating, talking, yawning and chewing helps the stiffness to resolve.