

Post Operative Care Following Surgical Tooth Extraction

1. Unless otherwise directed do not rinse the mouth the day of the surgery.
2. Ice packs should be used continuously to minimize swelling for the first twenty-four hours. Moist heat may be used after twenty-four hours for comfort.
3. Avoid hot liquids, carbonated, and alcoholic beverages for twenty-four hours.
4. Do not smoke or use soda or drink through straws.
5. Avoid spitting the day of surgery.
6. It is very important to keep your mouth very clean following surgery. A soft toothbrush, cotton swabs or gentle rinsing with salty water (1/2 teaspoon of salt in a full glass of warm tap water) is helpful before going to bed the night of surgery.
7. Beginning the next day, gently rinse the mouth using a full glass of warm water in which 1/2 teaspoon of salt has been dissolved three times a day. If you cannot get a supply of salt, use warm water anyway. You may brush your teeth gently and use a commercial mouthwash. Do not add salt to the warm water if you have high blood pressure or heart disease.
8. Eat soft foods (warm or cold) and maintain adequate daily fluid consumption. (Liquid food supplements, juices, malts, soup, etc.)
9. Small stitches may have been placed in the gums. These are dissolving sutures which will disappear in 6 or 7 days. You should have a return appointment for post operative check.

In Case of Bleeding

1. After your teeth were removed, a gauze compress was placed on the wound and you were asked to keep your jaws closed for 30-60 minutes. This was to help stop the bleeding and keep saliva away from the open socket. This compress may then be discarded.
2. Should slight bleeding continue, it is a good plan to put a fresh gauze compress on the bleeding place in the same manner, large enough so that it maintains pressure when the jaws are closed tightly. Hold it thus for 30 minutes by the clock. This may have to be repeated 3 or 4 times.
3. If bleeding continues in spite of the above, make a small amount of strong tea, boil it for 5 minutes, and then soak a small gauze compress in the tea. Place it firmly on the tooth socket which is bleeding and close the jaws tightly and hold this way for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary.
4. It also helps to stop the bleeding if you will lie down with the head raised on pillows. Apply an ice bag or cold compress to the cheek on that side. Do not become alarmed or excited. Slight oozing may continue for 1-2 days. Almost all bleeding will be controlled by these measures. Remember that bleeding may appear to be more than it actually is because of the dilution in the saliva.

Explanation of Symptoms that May Occur

1. Swelling and an elevated temperature of some extent follows nearly every extraction. This is nature's way of beginning the healing process. It does not mean infection is present. After the removal of impacted teeth or trimming of bone, swelling is often quite severe. It is most often marked on the 2nd or 3rd day and begins to disappear on the 4th or 5th day.
2. Stiffness of the jaws is also nature's way of resting the part which needs to be repaired, and usually relaxes about the 4th or 6th day.
3. Black and blue marks on the face are caused by bleeding internally into the cheeks or chin. This appears first as swelling, but after the 2nd or 3rd day it may discolor the face yellow, black, or blue. It will gradually disappear in a week or ten days. A wet towel may be applied for ten minutes, three times a day. This will be comforting but will not speed up the fading process.
4. Slight numbness of the lip or tongue may occur as was previously explained. The doctor who operated is entitled to be consulted first in case of trouble. He will appreciate the courtesy. Do not hesitate to call in an emergency.
5. If intravenous medications were administered, slight redness or tenderness may occur in the region of the vein. Apply a warm moist towel and call the office the next day.
6. After sedation, drowsiness may persist up to 24 or 36 hours. If this occurs, do not drive a motor vehicle or remain without supervision.
7. The prescription for relief of postoperative discomfort should be taken as directed. Alcohol or other medications may increase the sedative effects of the medicine.

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