



## Oral Surgery Post-Op Instructions

### **What can I expect after surgery?**

**Bleeding:** Minor bleeding and “oozing” is normal 24-48 hours after surgery is normal. If active bleeding persists, bite on 2 folded pieces of damp gauze over the extraction site. If biting on gauze does not stop bleeding, bite down on a wet black or brown tea bag (NOT GREEN TEA) at the extraction site. The tannins in the tea helps stop the bleeding.

**Swelling, bruising, and muscle soreness:** This is common after surgery. The maximum swelling and jaw stiffness normally occurs 2-3 days after the surgery. After this time, the swelling should decrease but may persist for 7-10 days.

**Pain:** The greatest amount of discomfort is in the first 6-8 hours after surgery and will slowly improve in 1-5 days. Never take pain medication on an empty stomach. Take one pain tablet immediately after you receive your prescription, before the numbness wears off. Pain can usually be controlled with over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen or Tylenol, but for more severe pain, take the pain medications prescribed by your doctor as instructed.

**Taste and odor:** A bad taste or odor, as well as white deposits in the socket, may be experienced during the next few weeks until the socket closes. This can sometimes be mistaken for an infection but is usually food particles sitting in the socket and is normal.

**Infection:** If swelling or discomfort worsens after the 4th day, along with a fever or heat around the extraction site, and/or difficulty swallowing, contact the office for an appointment.

**Dry socket:** This is a loss of the blood clot from the socket. There is constant pain that may radiate to other areas, including ear, jaw, and teeth that will not be relieved by pain medications. Symptoms can occur as far out as the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the procedure. If this happens to you, call the office. We will get you in and put a medicated dressing in the socket that will relieve discomfort. To help prevent a dry socket, avoid vigorous rinsing, sucking on straws, and smoking.

**The healing process:** This is slightly different for everyone. It will take around 3 months for your surgical site to completely cover up and your tissue to re-attach to the bone. During the healing process, your bone may become sharp and even poke through the gums. This is your body reshaping your ridge. While sometimes it is uncomfortable, it will most likely smooth itself off eventually. If you are too uncomfortable to wait for this to happen, we can smooth it at the office. Sometimes we must push tissue back from the bone to get the tooth out. Your gums will re-attach, but can be a food trap in the meantime. Try to keep the site clean during the healing process.

## **POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:**

### **Day 1:**

- Continue biting on gauze for 30-60 minutes following your procedure.
- Do **NOT** spit (passively empty your mouth when needed).
- Do **NOT** rinse, suck on straws, smoke, drink carbonated or alcoholic beverages, or perform strenuous activities that raise blood pressure (will reduce bleeding).
- Eat a cool, soft diet the first day.
- You may apply ice packs 15r minutes on, then 15 off, until bedtime.
- Brush teeth normally but avoid surgical site.
- Put a hand towel on your pillow to catch any blood-tinged saliva while sleeping. If possible, sleep with your head slightly elevated.

### **Day 2 and after:**

- Gently rinse with warm water mixed with 1 teaspoon of salt five times a day for at least a week.
- Resume regular hygiene with gentle rinses, still cautiously cleaning around the surgical site.
- After 36 hours, you may chew gum at intervals and apply moist heat to help muscle soreness and jaw stiffness.
- Around day 3, you may resume a regular diet as tolerated but should your jaw start to ache, resume a soft diet for a couple more days to rest the muscle.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

**IF FOR ANY REASON YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION,  
NOTIFY DR. MATTHEWS OR DR. MOSER RIGHT AWAY  
BY CALLING THE NUMBERS BELOW**

**New Haven Dental: 573-237-3038  
Dr. Nicole Matthews: 314-960-4746  
Dr. Jenifer Moser: 636-358-2606**