

Patient Self-Care Following Removal of Teeth

ACTIVITY: After leaving our dental office, we suggest you consider relaxing or at least limiting your activity as much as possible for the remainder of the day. Avoid strenuous activity and all aerobic exercise for the next 3 days.

DISCOMFORT: Some discomfort may be present when the anesthesia wears off. You have been given a prescription for an anti-inflammatory (NSAID) analgesic. Please take this as prescribed. This drug will greatly decrease the possibility of post-treatment swelling and pain and has been shown to accelerate healing. After the first 3 days, 2 Tylenol, or 2 Advil taken as indicated on the bottle, should keep you comfortable. Should intense discomfort occur at any time after the treatment, please take the narcotic medication (if one has been prescribed for you), as directed, or telephone the doctor and he will phone in a narcotic prescription for you. You may take both the narcotic and NSAID together. Their analgesic effect will be synergistic.

INFECTION: If you have been given an antibiotic please continue taking it as prescribed until all of the tablets have been taken. If you notice that after a few days, pain or swelling are increasing or that you are experiencing an elevated temperature, please call the doctor.

SWELLING: It is normal for some swelling to occur after treatment, particularly in the lower jaw. To minimize swelling after treatment, apply an ice bag wrapped in a light towel or handkerchief to the outside of your face over the treatment area. This should be left on your face for about 20 minutes, then removed for 20 minutes, or alternated from side-to-side, between treatment areas, for 2-3 hours after surgery. The use of both ice and the NSAID analgesic as described above will reduce the amount and duration of facial swelling.

BLEEDING: It is common to have slight bleeding for a few hours after tooth removal. If bleeding persists, apply a moistened tea bag to the surgical site with firm but gentle pressure for 15-20 minutes. Let yourself rest for 15 minutes then repeat the application of a tea bag for a second time if you still have slight bleeding. If excessive bleeding continues, please call our office. Remember, most of the blood you may see in your mouth is actually a little bit of blood mixed with a lot of saliva - blood is a very strong "dye" and a little bit of blood will color your saliva dramatically.

ORAL HYGIENE: Brushing and oral hygiene procedures should be done as usual in all untreated areas. In exposed, treated areas limit your oral hygiene to brushing using the sponge swabs provided. Avoid dental flossing in treated areas during the first week following surgery. Also avoid the use of water irrigation devices such as Water-piks for 1 month following treatment. The exposed, treated areas should be gently swabbed with a Q-tip (cotton tipped applicator) or sponge swab saturated with Peridex (Chlorhexidine) as a last oral hygiene procedure at bedtime and again in the morning, after eating and drinking.

EATING AND DRINKING: Limit diet to cool and soft foods until all anesthesia (numbness) has worn off. High protein foods and liquids are desirable for 3-5 days following surgery. Semi-solid foods may be eaten as long as this may be done comfortably. . Eggs, custard, yogurt, pasta, steamed vegetables, casseroles and cooked cereals are some things that you might consider eating during the first few days following your treatment. Avoid spicy, salty, acidic, or very hot foods or liquids. Also, avoid nuts, chips or other crunchy or fibrous foods which may become caught between your teeth.

We want your treatment to provide as positive a healing experience as possible. If you are having any problems or have any questions not covered in these guidelines, please feel free to call us at any time.