

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING DENTAL ANESTHESIA/SURGERY

****The best post-op instructions are on our website (www.dladds.com). Watch all 7 post-op videos.****

THINGS TO EXPECT:

- Bleeding:** Mild bleeding or "oozing" is normal for the first 12-24 hours following surgery (see Chapter 1 Video).
Swelling: Swelling is normal following a surgical procedure. It should reach its maximum on post-op day 4 and should begin to diminish by the sixth post-op day, gradually decreasing each day thereafter (see Chapter 2 Video).
Discomfort: Significant discomfort may occur for a few hours after the sensation returns to your mouth. It may gradually increase again on post-op days 2, 3, and 4 but should begin to diminish on day 6 and on each day thereafter.

THINGS TO DO IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY:

- Bleeding:** Place gauze over extraction sites and maintain pressure by biting until the bleeding has stopped. Repeat as needed. Keep head elevated, and rest. Do not suck or spit excessively. Also, please refrain from blowing into musical instruments. Do not sleep with gauze in your mouth (see Chapter 1 Video).
NOTE: Some "oozing" and discoloration of saliva is normal. If bleeding persists, replace the gauze with a clean, folded gauze placed over the extraction site, and maintain the pressure until the bleeding stops.
Swelling: Place ice or cold compresses on the region of surgery for 10 minutes every half-hour for the first 8-12 hrs.
NOTE: Ice bags or cold compresses should be used only on the day of surgery (see Chapter 3 Video).
Smoking: Avoid smoking for several weeks during the healing period, as smoking will make the pain much worse and will increase all post-op problems.
Discomfort: Most post-op pain can be relieved by taking non-prescription doses of Advil or Aleve, PLUS extra-strength Tylenol, every 4-6 hours for several days. Some patients may take intermittent doses of the prescription pain medication, but it should be used sparingly due to the side effects of the medication. If you are using any of these medications for the first time, exercise caution with the initial doses (start with ½ a pill).
Diet: A nutritious liquid diet, or a diet of foods that easily dissolve, will be ideal for the first weeks after surgery. Healing will occur in weekly increments; therefore, it is best to gradually (in weekly increments) return the diet and/or other mouth/oral activities back to normal. The number one reason for increased pain and swelling is having food stuck in the sockets (see Chapter 7 Video).
Physical Activity: For the first 24-48 hours, one should REST. Patients who have had sedation or who are taking the prescription pain medication should refrain from driving an automobile or from engaging in any task that requires alertness for the next 24 hours.

THE DAYS AFTER SURGERY:

1. Brush teeth carefully, and keep extraction site(s) CLEAN and free of food debris until holes close (in 3-6 weeks).
2. Beginning 24 hours after the surgery, rinse mouth with WARM SALT WATER (or prescription mouth rinse). Continue rinsing 2-3 times per day for 7 days, then begin irrigating per dentist's instructions (see #7 below).
3. If ANTIBIOTICS are prescribed, be SURE to take ALL that have been prescribed, AS DIRECTED (unless you are experiencing any adverse side effects), in which case you should contact Dr. Ayres (email contact is preferred).
4. Use WARM, MOIST HEAT on face for swelling, if any. Continue until the swelling subsides. A warm, wet washcloth or heating pad will suffice.
5. If SUTURES were used, they will dissolve on their own.
6. A DRY SOCKET is a delayed healing response that is most likely caused by food debris in the socket, by smoking, or by not taking pain medications as directed. Dry sockets may occur during the second-to-fourth post-operative day. They are associated with a throbbing pain on the side of the face, which may seem to be directed up toward the ear. In mild cases, simply increasing the pain medication can control the symptoms. If this is unsuccessful, please call Dr. Ayres (see Chapter 6 Video).
7. **RETURN TO YOUR DENTIST'S OFFICE** 5-7 days after the surgery for irrigation instructions.
8. Additional post-operative information can be found at www.dladds.com (see Chapter 4 Video).

CONTACT THE DOCTOR IF: (See Chapter 5 Video)

1. Bleeding is excessive and cannot be controlled.
2. Discomfort is poorly controlled (see Chapter 3 Video).
3. Swelling is causing any difficulty breathing or swallowing or if swelling is excessive, spreading, or continuing to enlarge after 60 hours. The swelling should start to improve after the end of day 5.
4. Allergic reactions to medications occur, which are causing a generalized rash or excessive itching.

Call 911 immediately if the patient has trouble breathing, becomes unresponsive, or is difficult to awaken. After calling 911, call Dr. Ayres at 803-818-1052 ASAP.