



# Cornerstone Dental Group

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**& Associates**

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## *Oral Surgery: Post-Operative Instructions*

### **Bleeding**

Normal oozing may occur for up to 24 hours following surgery and is controlled by firm biting pressure on several gauze pads placed over the tooth socket. Maintain pressure on the socket for 30 minutes after surgery and then replace gauze pads if necessary for further 30-minute intervals as needed. Smoking, vaping, drinking with a straw, spitting, and physical activity may cause bleeding; avoid these for at least 24 hours after surgery. Slow oozing is normal for up to 24 hours. If bleeding becomes brisk and fills your mouth quickly, contact us.

### **Swelling**

Swelling and bruising are common after surgery. It typically reaches a maximum at 48-72 hours after surgery and may last 7-10 days. To keep this to a minimum, apply ice packs 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off for the first 12-24 hours after your surgery. Keeping your head elevated also helps. Applying warm compresses, starting 48 hours after the surgery may expedite its resolution.

### **Pain**

Some discomfort is normal after surgery; this tends to be the worst in the first 6 to 8 hours following surgery. It can be controlled but not eliminated by taking the pain medication prescribed or recommended. Never take pain medication on an empty stomach. Follow the instructions given for any pain medication. If you have a reaction to the medication (such as itching or a rash develops), stop taking all medications and contact your dentist. If the pain worsens after the fourth day, contact us.

### **Pain Medication**

Often, over-the-counter pain medication is sufficient for pain control. Taking medication regularly prevents it from dipping below its peak efficacy. Recommended dosing is (unless contraindicated to use specific medications for medical reasons):

1. Ibuprofen/Advil 600mg every 6 hours (do not exceed 3200mg daily) **AND**
  - 2a. Acetaminophen/Tylenol 500mg every 6 hours (do not exceed 3000mg daily) **OR**
  - 2b. Prescribed pain medication if given (which already has Acetaminophen in it – so no need to take additional Acetaminophen)

For example, take 600mg Ibuprofen immediately following surgery and 3 hours later take 500mg Acetaminophen or prescribed medication, then 3 hours later take 600mg Ibuprofen, etc. If pain is controlled with Ibuprofen alone, you do not need to take Acetaminophen. Usually, prescribed pain medication is only required (if at all) in the first few days following surgery.

## Muscle Soreness

Difficulty opening the jaw and muscle stiffness are common after some oral surgery, particularly extraction of wisdom teeth. This is normal and will improve in 5-10 days. If you have a history of jaw pain, symptoms can take longer to resolve and may require adjunctive treatment (massage, physio, etc.) to improve. Moist heat after 48 hours can help muscle soreness.

## Mouth Care

Brush and floss as usual but avoid the surgical site for the rest of the day. Beginning the following day, rinse and spit very gently with salt water (one teaspoon of salt mixed with warm water) for 30-second intervals at least five times a day or the mouth rinse provided by your dentist; continue for a week. Two days following surgery, brush the area: run your toothbrush under hot water to soften the bristles and without toothpaste, lightly cleanse the area. Smoking/vaping is not advised postoperatively for a minimum of one week. Nicotine in any form interferes with the healing process and increases the incidence of complications.

## Stitches

If stitches were placed, they typically dissolve within 5-10 days. If non-dissolvable stitches were used, you will be scheduled for removal.

## Infection

If swelling increases after the fourth day, along with a fever or a foul taste/odour or any pus draining from the surgical site area, contact us. These may indicate an infection is present and you should call us.

## Dry Socket

A dry socket is when part of the blood clot either dissolves or falls out of the surgical site. This is not a serious complication but is often a painful one. A symptom of a dry socket is pain that increases several days after the surgery, typically around 3-5 days. If this is the case, please contact us, as some medication may need to be placed into the site to improve comfort as the healing progresses. Smoking, vaping, spitting, drinking through a straw, and vigorous exercise too soon after your surgery are some of the factors that can increase the risk of dry socket.

## Diet

It is important to maintain a good nutritional diet after surgery. Eat a lukewarm, soft diet the day of surgery up to a week following (dependent on the extent of surgery). Avoid very hot foods and drinks for the first 24 hours as this can dissolve the blood clot. Avoid hard, small foods (nuts/seeds/popcorn kernels, etc.) that could end up in the surgical site and potentially cause infection. Drink as much fluid as you can for three days. Some suggested foods include smoothies (eaten with a spoon), yogurt, puddings, ice cream, eggs, oatmeal, mashed potatoes, soft pasta, soup, and soft, well-cooked foods should be considered.

*If, for any reason, you are concerned about your condition, please notify us!!!*

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