

Post Operative Care

What to expect:

Certain tissue responses ALWAYS follow surgical procedure. Oral surgery, be it simple tooth extraction or more complicated, is a surgical procedure and the following responses can be expected.

1. **SWELLING:** Swelling will vary from slight to extreme puffiness. There is no way to predict the amount you will have. Usually, fair-skinned people experience more swelling. Maximum swelling occurs in 2-3 days, and should recede afterwards.
2. **TRISMUS:** The muscles that control your mouth are directly involved with impacted teeth. They are very often divided or reflected to gain access to the surgical areas. Of course, they will be sore and may not function properly for several days.
3. **PARESTHESIA:** The nerves that supply the lower jaw, lips, gums, tongue, and teeth pass through the surgical area. They are sometimes disrupted by the surgery or by the local anesthesia needle. In most instances this is only a minor nuisance and will disappear in a few days or a week. On rare occasions this may persist for a month or longer.
4. **SWALLOWING:** You will experience some difficulty in swallowing. This is transient and will disappear in a few days.
5. **BRUISING:** Some bruising on your face may be visible. This is due to leaking of blood into the tissue space. Discoloration will range from blue to a yellowish green and will persist for about a week. The discoloration may "gravitate" to areas below the surgery.
6. **DISCOMFORT:** Any injury to the body causes discomfort. It may vary from minimal to extreme discomfort depending upon the individual patient and the extent of surgery.
7. **MALAISE:** It is normal for you to feel poorly for a few days after surgery and/or while taking medication for pain.
8. **FEVER:** A temperature of 101°F may occur during the first two or three days. It normally responds to two aspirin or two Tylenol every four hours. Make sure your fluid intake is high.
9. **DRY SOCKET:** Sometimes the body will not properly nourish the blood clot in a tooth socket. The clot will then disintegrate and wash out. This leaves the bone uncovered and becomes very painful. Should this happen to you, you will begin to notice on about the 4th post-operative day that you feel worse and not better. The pain will frequently occur in your ear. If this happens, please call the office so we can help you.

Things for you to do:

Generally speaking, YOU MAY DO ANYTHING THAT YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WHILE DOING. IF ANY ACTIVITY MAKES YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE... STOP!

1. **BLEEDING:** When you leave the office, you will be biting into a gauze pad that has been placed over the surgical area. MAINTAIN CONSTANT PRESSURE OVER THE PAD FOR AT LEAST 1 HOUR. DO NOT

DISTURB. THIS A SURGICAL DRESSING. If, after removal, active bleeding continues, replace this dressing with a fresh one and continue to maintain pressure for another hour. Repeat this cycle until the bleeding stops. If you use all the gauze before the bleeding stops, you may use a moist tea bag as you would the gauze. Expect slight oozing for 72 hours.

2. DISCOMFORT: This is an extremely variable problem. The usual discomfort is experienced for about two to three hours after surgery; it may be severe. Pain medication has been prescribed, and it is suggested that you start taking the medication before the local anesthesia wears off. **DO NOT OVERDOSE.** Discomfort on the following day should not be as intense. Soreness will be your chief complaint. A headache on the next day is common.

3. DIET: Eat anything that you can chew or swallow with comfort. **YOU MUST KEEP YOURSELF WELL NOURISHED.** Milk products may cause nausea, but warm broths, soups, soft drinks or Gatorade will usually make you feel better.

4. MOUTH CARE: Do not forcefully rinse your mouth for twenty-four hours. This will often cause clot breakdown and continued bleeding. In twenty-four hours you may begin active mouth soaks with warm, mild salt solution. Do not pump water around in your mouth; just let it soak. The more this is done, the better you will feel. You may brush your teeth by using an extremely soft-bristled brush.

5. NAUSEA: This is usually due to not eating or taking too much pain medication. If you were given an anti-nausea medicine and it is not working, please call.

6. SUTURES: If stitches have been placed in your mouth, they should be removed in four to seven days. If they fall out in twenty-four hours, do not be alarmed. You will be given an appointment for your post-operative visit.

7. SORE ARM: Sometimes the medications given into the vein in your arm will cause the vein to be sore and feel hard. If this happens, place a hot, wet towel over the area for 30 minutes three times a day.

8. WORKING, DRIVING, ETC.: You will need to use good judgment concerning whether to return to work, to drive, or to manage anything complicated. The pain medication and the results of the surgery may interfere with your judgment. If you are feeling poorly or can notice that you are affected by the medications, stay home and take care of yourself. Hair washing can be done any time you desire.

We hope your recovery is an easy one and sincerely desire to help you in any way that we can. If you are worried or need help, please call us.

Sincerely,

Doctors Watts, Zakkak, and Watts