

CENTRE ORAL & FACIAL SURGERY

GREG KEWITT DMD, MD, FACS

INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING EXTRACTION OF WISDOM TEETH

Please read this handout carefully and keep it as a reference for after surgery. Every surgical procedure is different, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. When in doubt, or if you have any questions not addressed below, please do not hesitate to call.

Swelling and Pain

Discomfort and swelling of the face and jaw is normal. **You can expect to have some degree of pain and swelling for 7-10 days.** Often, pain and swelling will worsen 3-6 days after surgery. This is because potent anti-inflammatory medications that are given with the anesthesia wear off.

Achiness and pain can persist longer in some cases, especially if you have wisdom teeth removed after your mid-twenties.

Apply ice to the face during the first 24 - 48 hours after surgery to help reduce swelling and discomfort. After 24 - 48 hours, you may continue to apply ice or switch to a warm compress, whatever is more comforting. Also, sleeping with your head slightly elevated can help minimize swelling.

Massage and exercise your jaw. Massage and *wide* range of motion exercise helps to reduce muscle stiffness and pain. **It is the single MOST IMPORTANT thing you can do for a speedy recovery,** especially following the removal of lower molars or wisdom teeth.

Bleeding

Oozing from the surgical site(s) overnight is normal. You may notice that the bleeding is minimal at first. It is normal to experience some heavy episodes of bleeding 3-6 hours after your procedure. This often coincides with the numbing medication wearing off. **If needed, you may use gauze or a moist tea bag to help control the bleeding.** Bite down on gauze placed directly over the area of bleeding with gentle but firm *continuous* pressure for 30 to 45 minutes to control most bleeding episodes.

Medication

Take all medications as prescribed. Take the time to review any drug information provided to you by your pharmacist. It contains detailed information regarding medication side effects and precautions.

Do not take any below medications if allergic or otherwise advised by a physician.

Ibuprofen: Take 400mg (2 tablets) ibuprofen when you get home with food. Take another dose with the evening meal. The next day, take 400mg of ibuprofen three times a day with food. Taking one extra strength *Tylenol* between doses of ibuprofen has been shown to help with pain management without the adverse effects often seen with opioids. The prescription pain medication you received may also be used to supplement the ibuprofen/Tylenol if needed.

Some side effects of ibuprofen include gastrointestinal upset, bleeding, or worsening asthma symptoms. Generally, ibuprofen should be avoided if you regularly take blood thinners such as warfarin, Coumadin, or Plavix. It is recommended to consult with the prescribing physician.

Narcotic Pain Medication: **Do not** drive, use power equipment, engage in vigorous physical activity, or attempt to make important decisions if you need to use narcotic pain medication because **it can impair your judgment.** Additionally, pain medication may cause nausea and constipation. Taking the medication with food may reduce the chance of nausea. If you anticipate needing more prescription

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pain medication for the weekend please note: **telephone calls for narcotic pain prescription renewals are ONLY accepted during office hours.**

Antibiotics: The doctor may prescribe antibiotics to help prevent an infection. Complete the entire prescription. Antibiotics can produce several unwanted side effects including **gastrointestinal distress**, loose stools, and, in some rare cases, an **allergic skin reaction**. If you feel that you are having any of these reactions, please call our office.

Wound Care Do's and Don'ts

- Do your best to **avoid disturbing the tissues** in the area of your surgery. In some cases **sutures** are placed. They usually dissolve and fall out within 5-10 days.
- Brush and floss your teeth as usual but avoid the area(s) where the surgery was performed. Make every effort to clean your teeth within your range of comfort. **Good oral hygiene after surgery is very important.**
- Gently rinse your mouth with salt water (1/4 teaspoon salt dissolved in 8 ounces of warm water) 2-3 times a day **beginning the day after surgery**. Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing or use of water picks.
- Avoid mouth rinses containing alcohol such as **Scope®** or **Listerine®** for the next week. The high concentration of alcohol burns the tissues and can delay wound healing.
- **Avoid beverages containing alcohol** for a week after surgery as it can delay wound healing.
- **Do not smoke or use tobacco products.**
- Eat soft foods and nourishing liquids for the next 10-14 days. Do your best to avoid chewing in the area(s) where the surgery was performed.
- You may use a syringe to **gently irrigate** the extraction sites of any food debris as needed after meals. Over use of the syringe can cause increased pain and delayed healing.
- For the first two days, **keep vigorous physical activity to a minimum**. Light physical activity is encouraged the day following your surgery. If you are considering exercise, make sure that you are adequately hydrated and expect some throbbing. If bleeding occurs, exercising should be discontinued.
- Remember, the blood you may see in your mouth is actually a little bit of blood mixed with a lot of saliva. Blood is a strong dye. A little bit of blood will color your saliva dramatically.

Please remember that your follow-up visits are very important.

Our 24 hour, 7 days a week contact number is 814-235-7700.

Our web site, **centreoms.com**, has additional information that you may find useful.