

Post-Operative Instructions for Wisdom Tooth Removal

Proper care after surgery helps minimize pain, swelling, and the risk of infection. Please follow these instructions carefully.

Immediately After Surgery



Gauze Pads

- ▶ You will be given plenty of gauze immediately following surgery. It is unlikely that you will need more. If you do need more the office is happy to provide those for you or they can be purchased from any drug store.
- ▶ Keep the initial gauze pad in place for 30 minutes.
- ▶ After removal, replace with fresh gauze as needed (every 30 minutes to 2 hours) for up to 6-8 hours post-surgery.
- ▶ You may stop using gauze once bleeding subsides, typically before bedtime.
- ▶ If you nap or sleep with gauze in place, leave a small portion outside the mouth to prevent accidental swallowing.



Do Not Disturb the Wound

- ▶ For the first 24 hours: Do not rinse, spit, use straws, or vigorously brush near the extraction sites.
- ▶ Avoid touching the wound with your fingers or tongue to protect the blood clot.



Medication and Rest

- ▶ Begin your prescribed pain medications as directed, ideally before the numbness wears off.
- ▶ Rest quietly for the remainder of the day and resume normal activities as tolerated.



Ice Packs (First 36 Hours)

- ▶ Apply ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed.
- ▶ Use them on-and-off while awake for the first 36 hours to minimize swelling.
- ▶ If using ice is uncomfortable, it is not mandatory.

Bleeding



Normal Bleeding

- ▶ Slight oozing or redness in saliva is common for up to 24 hours.



Excessive Bleeding Control

- ▶ If your mouth fills with blood:
 - Gently rinse out old clots with mild, room-temperature water.
 - Place a new gauze pad directly over the extraction site and bite firmly for 30 minutes.
 - If bleeding continues, try a moistened tea bag the same way for 30 minutes.
 - Sit upright, stay calm, and avoid strenuous activity.
 - If bleeding persists, contact our office.



Swelling

▶ Expected Swelling

Swelling often peaks around 2-3 days post-surgery and may involve the mouth, cheeks, and sides of the face.

▶ Management

- Use ice packs for the first 36 hours.
- After 36 hours, switch to warm, moist heat if swelling or stiffness continues.



Pain Management

- ▶ Complete pain elimination is unrealistic, but we aim for good control.
- ▶ Follow our pain management guidelines and take prescribed medications as directed.

Diet



Immediately After Anesthesia

- ▶ Start with clear liquids.
- ▶ Avoid straws for at least 24 hours.
- ▶ Avoid rich, heavy, or fatty foods (e.g., milkshakes) immediately, as they may cause nausea. Smoothies without a straw are a good alternative.



Next Few Days

- ▶ Eat soft foods and chew away from the surgical sites.
- ▶ Ensure adequate calorie and protein intake.
- ▶ Stay well-hydrated (aim for at least 5-6 glasses of water daily).
- ▶ Avoid very hot liquids that may irritate the surgical site.



Oral Hygiene

► First 24 Hours

- Do not rinse, spit, or use mouthwash.
- You may gently brush your teeth, avoiding the surgical areas.

► After 24 Hours

- Begin gentle warm saltwater rinses (1 tsp salt in 1 cup warm water) 5-6 times a day, especially after meals.
- Use the prescribed mouth rinse 2-3 times a day starting 24 hours after surgery.
- At 3 days post-surgery, use the provided irrigation syringe to gently rinse the lower sockets as instructed.



Bruising and Discoloration

- Bruising (black, blue, green, or yellow) may appear around 2-3 days post-surgery.
- Apply warm compresses after 36 hours to encourage faster resolution of discoloration.



Antibiotics (If Prescribed)

- Take antibiotics exactly as directed.
- If you develop a rash or other adverse reactions, stop the medication and call our office.
- Antibiotics are not always necessary and may only be given at the time of surgery.



Nausea and Vomiting

- Stay hydrated and eat small, bland meals to prevent nausea.
- Keep your head elevated and avoid lying flat after meals.
- Consider aromatherapy or acupressure (P6 point on your wrist) for relief.
- Limit or avoid opioid medications, as they frequently trigger nausea.
- Contact our office if nausea persists.

Other Considerations



Numbness

- Temporary numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue is normal. Avoid biting these areas. Contact us if numbness persists beyond 24 hours.



Dry Socket

- If you experience increasing pain a few days post-surgery accompanied by a bad taste or smell, it may indicate a dry socket. Contact our office for more information.



Fever

- ▶ A slight temperature elevation is normal. A fever is defined as a persistent temperature above 101.2°F. Call our office if this occurs.



Sore Throat/Jaw Stiffness

- ▶ Mild sore throat or difficulty opening your mouth is normal and should improve within 1-2 weeks. Gentle jaw stretching can begin about 7-10 days after surgery.



Bony Edges

- ▶ Hard projections in the mouth may occur and often smooth out naturally over time. If persistent, contact us.



Dry Lips

- ▶ Keep lips moisturized to prevent cracking.



Exercise and Activity

- ▶ Avoid strenuous activity, including exercise that elevates your heart rate, for at least 5 days after surgery.
- ▶ Resume normal routines gradually, listening to your body's comfort level.



Sutures

- ▶ Dissolvable stitches generally dissolve within 3-14 days.
- ▶ If a stitch becomes loose, you may remove it or let it fall out naturally.



When to Contact Us

- ▶ If you experience uncontrolled bleeding, severe pain not relieved by medication, persistent nausea, increased swelling after the third day, foul-tasting discharge, or persistent fever over 101°F, call our office immediately.



If You Have Questions

- ▶ We are here to help. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office or your surgeon directly.

By following these instructions, you will help ensure a smoother, more comfortable recovery.

