



**Children's Hospital Boston**

Department of Dentistry

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**HARVARD SCHOOL  
OF DENTAL MEDICINE**

Division of Pediatric Dentistry

Department of Oral and Developmental Biology

## Care Instructions Following Local Anesthesia

Your child has received local anesthesia (“Novacaine”) today as part of their dental treatment. You should watch your child carefully to prevent them from chewing, scratching or vigorously rubbing the numb area since your child will feel no pain for up to several hours. This is most often a problem when the lower jaw is numb since the numbness may include the lip, chin, inner cheek area and the tongue. The anesthesia will typically last 2-3 hours, although this time may vary.

During this time your child should avoid chewing any food on that side as this may result in accidental self-inflicted trauma (injury). Maintain a soft or liquid diet only for this initial period.

Should your child accidentally bite or chew their mouth, soreness and swelling may occur, but uneventful healing should take 7-10 days and leave no scarring. The area would appear whitish in color which is not an indicator of infection, but rather represents both the traumatized tissues and the newly forming healing tissue.

Feel free to give your child Tylenol<sup>®</sup>, Advil<sup>®</sup> or other children's non-aspirin containing pain mediation for any discomfort.