



**Children's Hospital Boston**

Department of Dentistry

Children's Hospital, Boston

300 Longwood Avenue – MailStop: HU – 226

Boston, Massachusetts 02115

phone 617-355-6571 – fax 617-730-0478

[www.childrenshospital.org/dentistry](http://www.childrenshospital.org/dentistry)



**HARVARD SCHOOL  
OF DENTAL MEDICINE**

Division of Pediatric Dentistry

Department of Oral and Developmental Biology

## **Postoperative Instructions Following Dental Extractions and Other Oral Surgery**

- Bite on gauze for 30 minutes after surgery. Expect some oozing of blood and bloodstained saliva throughout today and tonight. If there is blood flowing from a socket or surgical site, or if blood clots develop in the mouth, bite on gauze square for 30 minutes.
- **DO NOT RINSE YOUR MOUTH TODAY.** Rinsing could cause bleeding. Tomorrow, start rinsing with plain warm water every 2-4 hours while awake and especially after meals. If you prefer, you may use saline (add ½ teaspoon of salt to 8 oz of water).
- Begin to carefully, but thoroughly brush your teeth the day after surgery. If your dentist recommends Peridex (chlorhexidine), begin to use it the day after surgery as instructed. As instructed. Typically, it is recommended to use the Peridex twice daily after brushing and rinsing your mouth.
- Crushed ice in a plastic bag, and wrapped in a towel should be used for the first 24 hours post-operatively. Apply the ice 20 minutes on, then 20 minutes off.
- Resume eating and drinking as soon as soon as you are comfortable and the anesthesia has worn off. Avoid spicy, sticky, hard or crunchy foods for several days after oral surgery. Encourage liquids and food that are not extremely hot. Do not drink through a straw. Suggestions for diet postoperatively are milkshakes, soups, yogurt, ice cream and juices, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, beans, and soft rice. You may eat any food you



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desire, however, nothing too hot or too hard for the first day. Soft foods are preferable. Use your own discretion.

- If you have cause for concern, call the Dental Department at (617) 355-6571 from 9:00 a.m.- 5 p.m. During after hours and on weekends, please call the hospital page operator.
- Keep your head elevated on 2 or 3 pillows during the postoperative period. This helps to keep down the swelling and bleeding. Avoid vigorous activity and bending or heavy lifting for a few days post-operatively. Also, refrain from contact sports for two to three weeks.
- If you have had impacted teeth removed or exposed, expect the swelling to increase for 48 hours before it starts to decrease. Discomfort may also be present for 48 hours before it starts to improve.
- If pain increases on the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> day after the extraction and/or if the tooth is bleeding, please call us. You may have “dry socket,” an extraction socket where the blood clot has dissolved prematurely and the socket becomes painful.
- Antibiotics and/or pain and medication may be prescribed; if not, Tylenol is usually sufficient for discomfort. If a narcotic is prescribed, be cautious about driving or operating machinery while taking such medication. **IMPORTANT:** if any rashes or unusual symptoms occur, stop the medications immediately and call the office. Complete bed rest is not necessary; however, minimize your normal activities at least 24 hours after surgery the first day.