



Family Education Sheet



Home Care Instructions after Dental Extractions and Other Oral Surgery

Here is some information about what to expect after dental extractions and other oral surgery.

After Discharge from Outpatient Department, Ambulatory Unit or Day Surgery Unit

- Bite on gauze for 20 minutes after surgery. Expect some oozing of blood-stained 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 20 minutes. If this does not stop bleeding, please call The Children's Hospital Page Operator (617) 355-6369 and ask to speak to the oral surgeon on call.
- Keep your head elevated, propped up on 2 or 3 pillows; this will help minimize the swelling and bleeding.
- Crushed ice in a plastic bag wrapped in a towel can be used on the face 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for the first 24 hours after surgery.
- Children are prone to bite a numb lip or tongue; watch carefully for this until the numbness wears off.
- Do not rinse the mouth vigorously the day of surgery. This could cause bleeding. On the day after surgery, start rinsing with plain warm water every 2 to 4 hours while awake, especially after meals. If you prefer, you may use saline (add ½ teaspoon of salt to 8 oz of water).

Start careful but thorough tooth brushing the day after surgery. You may use toothpaste. If you have been given a prescription for Peridex[®], begin using that the day after your surgery. Rinse your mouth thoroughly with Peridex[®] then spit out. Use twice a day, morning and evening. Use Peridex[®] as prescribed and instructed by your doctor and nurse.

Activity

- Avoid vigorous activity with bending or heavy lifting for 48 to 72 hours after your surgery. Avoid contact sports for 2 to 3 weeks after surgery.

Nutrition

- You may eat and drink as soon as you are comfortable and the anesthesia has worn off. Avoid spicy, sticky, hard, crunchy and hot foods for 2 to 3 days after surgery. Do not use straws. Some suggestions for foods include: milkshakes, yogurt, ice cream, juices, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, beans and pasta

Pain Management and Medications

- If you have had impacted teeth (teeth below the gumline) removed, expect swelling to increase for 48 hours before it starts to decrease. Discomfort may

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also be present for 48 hours before it starts to improve. There may also be some black and blue on the face and neck.

- “Dry socket” is an extraction socket where a blood clot has dissolved prematurely and the socket becomes painful. Typically, the pain increases on the 4th or 5th day after surgery. If dry socket occurs, the socket requires a gauze “pack” to be done by the doctor. If pain increases in this manner, please call The Children’s Hospital Page Operator (617) 355-6369 and ask to speak to the oral surgeon on call.
- Antibiotics may be prescribed. Take as directed and remember to finish all of the medication.
- Acetaminophen (also know as Tylenol®) usually helps the pain and discomfort. Acetaminophen comes as a tablet, caplet, and liquid. It is used to relieve mild to moderate pain and to reduce fever. It is very important to take acetaminophen exactly as directed by your doctor. Follow the directions on the package and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Do not take more or less of it than prescribed by your doctor. Do not take it any more often than prescribed by your doctor.
- If pain medication is prescribed by your doctor, take the pain medicine as prescribed and instructed by your doctor and nurse.

When to Call the Doctor

- **After 2 to 3 days, decreased swelling, decreased pain and a better feeling overall should be noticed.** If fever, drainage, redness, increased swelling, increased pain or a persistent bad taste in the mouth is noticed, call your doctor. These are possible signs of infection.
- **For true medical emergencies, call the Children’s Hospital Emergency Room at (617) 355-6611. Adult patients can call Brigham and Women’s Hospital at (617) 732-5636; adult patients can also be seen at Brigham and Women’s hospital after hours if needed.**
- **If you have a question or concern Monday-Friday after 5pm or on the weekends, call the Children’s Hospital Page Operator at (617) 355-6369 and ask for the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Resident on-call.**

Follow-up

- Please schedule a follow-up appointment with your doctor in one week. This is a short visit to examine your surgical site.

A [Spanish](#) version of this is available from your provider

Send comments or questions to: Familyed@childrens.harvard.edu
