

Post-Surgery Guidelines



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Post-Surgery Guidelines

Call Dr. Mark A. Craig for any post-operative Questions or Problems - Cell Phone # 555-5555-5555

We hope that your surgical experience will be a pleasant. We have a few suggestions that have proven helpful over the years. All extractions are not created equal and your experiences may vary. Major problems are rare, but we cannot help if we do not know you're having a problem. Please call if you feel you are not progressing as expected. The on-call doctor is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week including holidays.

Suggestions

Rest

A period of rest and relaxation following surgery is suggested. Avoid any significant physical exertion until you have fully recovered.

Follow the Dietary Restrictions

Liquids or soft foods which require little effort to chew are appropriate for the first few days following surgery. Slowly advance your diet toward normal to avoid premature loss of your stitches.

Elevate Your Head

Use several pillows and try to sleep on your back for the first few days. This will hasten the resolution of any facial swelling associated with your surgery.

Apply Ice

Ice applied to the face will also limit the extent of facial swelling; however, it is of no benefit after 24 hours.

Don't Smoke for 72 Hours

If you smoke, try to abstain during the first 72 hours. Smokers have an almost 50% chance of developing a dry socket complication.

Medication Guidelines

Common Reactions to Anesthesia

We usually use long acting local anesthesia. It is not uncommon to be numb for 6, 8, 10, hours or longer. Although rare, nausea does occur. It can be related to anesthesia or other medication you have been prescribed. Taking your medications following a meal can reduce the occurrence of nausea.

Pain Medicine

Take the pain pills before the numbness wears off and stay on a schedule every 4-6 hours for the first day. You can then take your medicine to fit your individual needs. If your pain is not improving by the fourth or fifth day you may have a dry socket.

Antibiotics

Take one dose of your antibiotic before bedtime. On day two, you will follow the instructions on the bottle until the medication has been completed.

Anti-Inflammatory

Some of you will receive a prescription for an anti-inflammatory medication. Take it the day of surgery after you have started eating or the following day when you are able to eat. Avoid using any other medicine, which contain Aspirin or Advil. If you experience any stomach pain or heartburn symptoms, stop the anti-inflammatory immediately.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a dry socket?

It's a bad name for a bad thing. It is where the blood clot is lost early from extraction site due to smoking, spitting, excessive rinsing, advancing the diet too rapidly, strenuous physical activity, drinking through a straw, etc. It may also be related to your blood chemistry and clotting factors.

What are the symptoms of a dry socket?

It has been described as thumping, throbbing pain, not relieved by pain medicine occurring 3-4 days after an extraction. It is more common in the lower jaw and may feel like an earache. You will need to call us so that we can place a medicated dressing into the socket. This will greatly diminish the pain.

When will the swelling go away?

Most surgical swelling peaks in 72 hours. It may take up to a week for it to resolve completely. Do not re-apply ice to your face as this will decrease blood flow to the area leading to muscle stiffness, soreness, and a longer recovery. If you desire warm compresses applied to the face after the first 3 or 4 days may actually hasten the resolution of the swelling. Remember, swelling is your body's natural response to surgery and rarely indicates a post-operative infection.

Can I brush my teeth?

Yes, be thorough, but be gentle. Clean the teeth around the surgical areas as best you can.

What is the syringe for?

If you are given a plastic syringe, it is used to gently rinse the socket with water. This prevents debris from being trapped inside the healing wound. Do not use it until 3-4 days after your surgery. Use it after each meal until the socket no longer traps food. This may be one to several weeks depending on the size and location of the extraction site.

How long does the bleeding last?

Most heavy bleeding begins to stop in 6-8 hours. However, some oozing for 2-3 days can be considered normal. Changing the gauze pads every 45 minutes for several hours following surgery is to be expected. Fold them as directed. Moisten them slightly so that they do not stick to the stitches or the wound. Position them over the site and bite down. Without firm pressure or adequate bulk, the gauze will be of little benefit, as it will merely act as a sponge. If the bleeding persists after 6-8 hours, try using a damp regular tea bag in the same manner as the gauze pads. This usually works well.

Do the stitches need to be removed?

In most instances they will dissolve in 3-5 days. If you have silk or nylon stitches which we must remove, we will inform you and schedule an appointment to remove them at no cost.