



Dental Specialists  
OF AMERICA

## After Your Surgery

### After Your Surgery

The success of your surgery will depend, in part, on proper care after the surgery. While you've already received these guidelines on dealing with the post-operation affects of your surgery, we offer them here as a reference and reminder.

### Bleeding

Keep the gauze that was placed in your mouth at the time of surgery in place for 30 minutes. If bleeding is still present when you remove the gauze, place new gauze in the area for 15-minute intervals until bleeding stops.

Occasionally, because of discomfort or numbness in the area, the gauze will be placed between the teeth instead of directly over the surgery site. Make sure when placing the gauze, that pressure is applied directly on the surgery site.

Pink saliva (oozing) is normal following extractions. However, excessive bleeding and clotting is abnormal. If biting down on the gauze does not stop the bleeding, contact your doctor.

### Swelling

Swelling is normal with any surgical procedure. You will reach your maximum swelling 48 hours after the surgery. The swelling will gradually subside. You can expect swelling to go down by 50% at four days and by 95% at seven days after surgery.

**Ice Packs:** **Do not** apply ice to the surgical area unless specifically instructed to use it. Following certain procedures, ice may be helpful in the first 2-3 hours only, but only if specifically recommended.

If you are still concerned about the swelling you are experiencing, contact your doctor.

## Nausea

After surgery, nausea may occur due to:

1. Pre surgery anxiety
2. Drugs given during surgery
3. Medications taken after surgery

Pre surgery anxiety causes increased stomach acid production and that, associated with an empty stomach, can lead to nausea. It is recommended that as soon as possible (within 1 to 2 hours) after surgery, the patient should begin a liquid diet. Avoid caffeine. Ice chips and ginger ale will calm the stomach. Liquids including Ensure, Jell-O and light soups or broths will help protect the stomach and start the digestive process.

We generally do not use any medications during surgery that would aggravate the stomach.

Some pain medications and some antibiotics may cause nausea. If the pain pills are causing nausea, then break the pill in half and take half, wait 1/2 hour, and take the other half. You may supplement your narcotic pain medication with Ibuprofen or Tylenol to help prevent stomach irritation.

If nausea or vomiting persists, contact your doctor.

## Pain

Pain is a normal sensation experienced after any surgical procedure. Your surgeon has used a long-acting local anesthetic so you should be comfortable for approximately two hours.

### Special Ibuprofen protocol:

Low doses Ibuprofen can be used to raise the pain threshold and reduce or eliminate the need for narcotic pain medications. You may use this protocol as the first method of pain control.

Take two Ibuprofen 200 mg tablets every 3 to 4 hours for the first 24 to 48 hours continuously even if you are not having any pain. You can supplement with the prescribed pain med for any breath through pain.

If the pain pill causes nausea, take half a pill, then take the other half in 30 minutes. Refer to instruction for Nausea.

If you are still concerned about the pain you are experiencing, contact your doctor.

## Infection

Infection is an abnormal sequence of events after surgery. Decreasing the amount of bacteria in the surgery site helps control infections. This is accomplished by absolute cleanliness throughout the oral cavity.

You should brush your teeth as you always do, and use frequent rinses of either salt water (1/4 teaspoon salt in a glass of water) or the mouthwash of your choice.

Symptoms of infections develop on the third to fourth day after surgery.

You have also been given a prescription for an antibiotic to prevent the development of an infection which you should take according to the instructions.

If you are still concerned about the possibility of infection, contact your doctor.

## General Instructions

1. Do not sleep on the affected side. If both sides have had surgery, sleep with your head elevated during the next 24-48 hours.
2. You may eat any foods that you can tolerate. You do not have to maintain a special diet unless specifically instructed to do so.
3. Activity: Good judgment is the guide for activity. Operation of equipment while taking certain pain medications may be dangerous.

If you have any questions concerning your post-operative instructions, or have any problems during your post-operative course, do not hesitate to contact your doctor.