

# Post-operative instructions

## Immediately following surgery

01

### Remove gauze

The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should remain in place for about 30 minutes. After this time, remove and discard the gauze, then replace it with fresh gauze directly over the surgical area. Repeat this process until the bleeding subsides.

02

### Avoid rinsing or touching

Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area after surgery, as this can cause the blood clot to dislodge and lead to bleeding. **DO NOT USE A STRAW FOR 1 WEEK.**

03

### Take prescribed medication

Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as you start to feel discomfort, which will usually occur as the local anesthetic begins to wear off.

04

### Restrict activities

Avoid exercise, heavy lifting, bending over; or playing a wind instrument for one week unless otherwise advised by your doctor. After tooth extractions, the lower jaw should be opened widely and stretched frequently to avoid stiffness. A good measurement is 3 fingers in height.

05

### Ice packs

Place ice packs on the side of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for explanation.



**Sutures:** We use dissolvable sutures, so it's normal to notice some loosening a few days after your procedure—no need to worry. A GluStitch dressing was applied to the surgical site and will naturally fall off within 3 to 7 days. During this time, the area may feel rough to your tongue and appear blue or purple. Please avoid touching or disturbing it while healing takes place.

**Healing & common symptoms:** As the area heals, small bone fragments may surface near the gums—this is a normal part of the healing process but let us know if they become uncomfortable. After lower tooth extractions, some patients experience temporary numbness or tingling in the lower lip, which typically improves over time. A low-grade fever (under 101°F) for a few days is also normal. If numbness persists, or if your temperature goes above 101°F, please contact our office.

**Special considerations:** Avoid blowing your nose for 10 days, sneeze with your mouth open, and minimize sneezing when possible. An antihistamine may help with congestion, and if you use a CPAP machine, please check with us. For implant patients, avoid using electric toothbrushes and water picks near the site. If prescribed, use Chlorhexidine (Peridex) by gently rinsing or applying it with gauze or a Q-tip for two weeks. GluStitch has also been applied to implant sites and will detach on its own. The area may feel rough or appear discolored—please avoid disturbing it.

**Bleeding:** A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for thirty minutes. Repeat if necessary. In order to stop bleeding, the pressure from the gauze must be placed directly over the surgical area. Chewing on the gauze only stimulates saliva flow, increases the risk of more bleeding, and risks injury to the numb oral structures. If bleeding continues, gently wipe away any formed clot over the surgical site and bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, please call the office for further instructions.

**Swelling:** Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes and sides of the face is not uncommon. Swelling and mild bruising is normally expected and is usually proportional to the surgery involved. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. Many times the swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. A bag filled with ice, or ice packs should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left on continuously while you are awake. After the first 24-to-36 hours, ice has little beneficial effect to reduce swelling. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm, as this is a normal reaction to surgery.

**Pain:** For severe pain, take the prescribed pain medication tablets as directed. The prescribed pain medicine might make you feel groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery is usually at its worst 24 to 48 hours after surgery, after that it should subside more and more every day. If pain persists or worsens, it may require attention and you should contact the office for further instruction.

**Diet:** After General Anesthetic or IV Sedation, liquids should be initially taken. DRINK FROM A GLASS AND DO NOT USE A STRAW, as the sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Nourishment should be taken regularly. You should prevent dehydration by taking fluids regularly. Your food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. At least 5-6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat.

**Caution:** If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy. If you are lying down following surgery, make sure you sit for one minute before standing.

**Keep the mouth clean:** No vigorous rinsing should be performed until the day following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery, but rinse gently. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 5-6 times a day, especially after eating, with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt. It is recommended that you refrain from smoking for at least 72 hours, or if possible, up to two weeks after surgery for best results.

**Discoloration:** As mentioned earlier some discoloration (bruising) is common. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post-operatively. Bruising can take 14 days to resolve. Avoid sun exposure until the discoloration has resolved.

**Antibiotics:** If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent or treat infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

**Nausea and vomiting:** Nausea and vomiting are common side effect of IV Sedation, General Anesthesia, and many narcotic oral pain medications. In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour, including the prescribed pain medicine. You should then sip on coke, tea or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period. Once the nausea subsides, you can begin taking solid foods and restart the prescribed pain medicine. If the nausea and vomiting do not resolve, please contact our office.

For questions or concerns, please contact the office:

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