



Call: 406-656-6100
Toll Free: 877-325-6100

Post-Operative Instructions Following 3rd Molar Removal (Wisdom Teeth)/Dental Surgery

Bleeding:

Biting on the gauze pads will probably be necessary for the first few hours to control bleeding. Be sure to change them every 15 minutes or so. Keep the head elevated and rest. Do not spit or rinse excessively, or engage in physical activity since this stimulates bleeding. Some oozing could last up to 24 hours. **Please Note:** *If heavy bleeding persists, replace the gauze with a clean folded gauze pad placed over the surgery site and maintain pressure until the bleeding stops. In rare cases, a tea bag (tannic acid) may need to be used to encourage clotting (regular, not herbal tea). Call our office if your bleeding does not stop or remains heavy.*

Swelling:

Swelling is normal following any surgical procedure in the mouth. It should reach its maximum within 18 to 32 hours and then diminish substantially by the fifth to eighth day after the procedure. The anti-inflammatory medications we often use/prescribe can substantially reduce swelling and speed up recovery.

Place ice or cold compresses on the face in the area of the surgery for ten minutes every half-hour for the first eight to twelve hours. Ice is only effective on the day of surgery.

Discomfort:

The greatest discomfort will occur as the anesthetic wears off, usually within 1 to 2 hours after the procedure. If a long-acting anesthetic was used, you may be numb for much longer. Pain medications can require 30 to 45 minutes to take effect, so do not wait for pain to become severe before taking your prescribed medication dosage. The pain should gradually diminish over the next few days. Take 600-800 mg. ibuprofen (Advil®) every 4-6 hours as needed for pain. If additional pain relief is needed, take 1000 mg. Tylenol® with the Ibuprofen every 4-6 hours as needed. DO NOT exceed 4000 mg Tylenol® per day, and for NO more than 2 days in a row. If you still have unmanaged pain, you may take your prescription pain medicine instead of Tylenol.

Smoking:

Avoid smoking during the first week after surgery.

Diet:

A nutritious liquid diet is necessary for the first day. Hard foods eaten while the mouth is numb can dislodge sutures (stitches) and cause other problems. As the numbness wears off, you can gradually progress to harder foods.

Physical Activity:

You should rest and relax for at least 24 to 48 hours after any dental surgical procedure.

Continued on Back



The Day After Surgery:

1. Brush your teeth, but avoid the surgery area. As your mouth heals, gradually brush the teeth near the surgery area. Placing your toothbrush under hot water for a few moments can soften the bristles.
2. Use warm salt water as a mouth rinse 3-5 times per day for 5-7 days after surgery.
3. If antibiotics are prescribed be sure to take them all as directed.
4. We generally use self-absorbing sutures (stitches) that do not need to be removed. Occasionally, the doctor will recommend a follow-up office visit five to seven days after surgery. This also allows us to address any problems, prevent unnecessary pain, and ensure rapid healing.
5. “Dry socket” is a delayed healing response that can occur during the fourth to seventh post-operative day. It involves a lost clot which is beneficial to healing which can cause throbbing pain on the side of the face that may radiate up toward the ear. In mild cases, simply increasing the pain medication for a few days can control the symptoms. If this is unsuccessful, please call our office to arrange for medication to be placed in the socket. The condition generally resolves itself even if untreated. Dry sockets can be caused or aggravated by rinsing or spitting too much on the first day after surgery, engaging in too much physical activity, using a straw, smoking, taking birth control pills, a difficult surgical procedure, or by a pre-existing infection. The condition is more common in patients over 30 years of age.
6. Do not chew hard (even on a hard crust of bread or piece of ice) for four to six weeks after having your lower wisdom teeth removed, and do not participate in sports where you could be struck in the jaw. The lower jaw is temporarily weakened after this procedure and an impact could cause a fracture requiring the jaws to be wired together for healing.
7. Residual anesthesia or other medication in your body can make some people light-headed for a few days, particularly during or after a hot shower. Be very careful after any surgical procedure and while taking medication. You may need to avoid driving, operating dangerous equipment, or other activities that could be adversely affected.

Contact Our Office If:

- Excessive bleeding that cannot be controlled
- Excessive discomfort or pain
- Swelling is excessive, spreading or continuing to enlarge after 48 hours
- Allergies or other reactions to medications occur

If any problems or questions do arise, please feel free to call the office at **406-656-6100**

Post-Operative Instructions Following Dental Surgery is also available on our website at www.BrewerDentalCenter.com.