

CROWLEY ORAL SURGERY AND ASSOCIATES

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

*****PLEASE READ BOTH SIDES OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY*****

Sometimes the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification. If you were seen in the Londonderry office, please call (603) 437-7600, or if you were seen in our Salem office, please call (603) 893-7601.

DAY OF SURGERY

GAUZE: Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. The packs should be gently removed after 1 hour.

PERSISTENT BLEEDING: Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs. If bleeding persists or becomes heavy you may **substitute a tea bag** (soaked in warm water, squeezed damp-dry and wrapped in a moist gauze) for 20 or 30 minutes. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office.

OOZING: Intermittent bleeding or oozing during day or overnight is normal. No need to be alarmed. If bleeding is heavy and persistent, refer to "PERSISTENT BLEEDING" instructions.

AVOID SURGICAL SITE: Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do **NOT** rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently. **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 48 hours, since this is very detrimental to healing and may promote a dry socket. Do not use straws to avoid suction which could dislodge the clot.

SWELLING: Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed. Swelling can be at its peak on the 3rd or 4th day after surgery. Sometimes, resting with your head elevated can be helpful (4-5 pillows).

PAIN RELIEF: Most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for one or two types of pain medication, an anti-inflammatory and a narcotic. Avoid sun exposure while taking prescription medications, as an adverse skin reaction may occur.

We recommend using an anti-inflammatory medication (if you are able to take this) such as Naproxen or Ibuprofen on a regular fixed schedule for 1-2 days. If there is a break-through pain, the narcotic pain medication can be added as needed according to instructions. If you take the first dose of the anti-inflammatory before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.

Some patients find that stronger narcotic pain medicine causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. Some patients may even require two of the narcotic pain pills at one time. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off; after that your need for medicine should lessen. **If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medicine at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, you must call for a refill during weekday business hours.**

When taking a narcotic pain medication, such as hydrocodone and oxycodone you can experience constipation. While taking these narcotics you must drink plenty of water or fluids. To prevent constipation consider using Metamucil, prunes or prune juice. If constipation results, use a laxative and continue with fluids.

ANTIBIOTICS: You may be given medication to prevent infection. Use as directed and continue until prescription is finished. **Caution:** Women, if you are taking birth control medication and have been prescribed an antibiotic, it is

possible that the effectiveness of the birth control medication will be decreased for your **entire monthly cycle. Use an alternate form of contraception until the next full pill pack is used.**

NAUSEA: Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Nausea may be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better. Classic Coca Cola or Emetrol (OTC) may help with nausea.

DIET: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot temperature or spicy foods. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

SHARP EDGES: If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls which once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.

SUTURES: Resorbable sutures are frequently used for extraction sites. They usually become loose 5-7 days after surgery, however, if they are lost even as early as the first day, as long as there is no active bleeding it is not usually a problem. If the sutures are troublesome you may return to the office for removal. You may snip them yourself with a small clean scissor if you care to do so.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

MOUTH RINSES: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution, taking five minutes to use the entire glassful. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily.

BRUSHING: Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

HOT APPLICATIONS: On the 3rd or 4th day you may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

HEALING: Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. **The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement.** If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. If you are given a plastic irrigating syringe, **DO NOT** use it for the first five days. Then use it daily according to the instructions until you are certain the tooth socket has closed completely and that there is no chance of any food particles lodging in the socket.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during office hours will allow a faster response to your question or concern. Outside of regular office hours, please try to call the doctors by 7am with your concerns. **PLEASE NOTE: Telephone calls for narcotic (pain killer) prescription renewal are accepted only during office hours.**

Remember that you have just had a surgical procedure and need to take care of yourself. Rest quietly at home, keeping your head elevated on several pillows or sitting in an easy chair. By the second day after surgery, most patients resume their normal activities with moderation. Removal of impacted teeth or other more extensive procedures may require 4-5 days of rest and recuperation.