

Instructions for the next few days

Mouth Rinses: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a small glass of warm water and gently rinse. Repeat as often as you like but at least two or three times daily after meals for one week following surgery. Avoid commercial mouth rinses as they often contain a small amount of alcohol.

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

Healing: Normal healing after tooth extractions should be as follows:

The two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling and/or bruising in the affected area.

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 a gradual steady improvement. Any swelling will usually peak around the fourth to fifth day.

You may notice a 'cavity' where the tooth/teeth were removed. This will gradually fill with new tissue over the next few months. In the meantime the area should be kept clean especially after meals with salt-water rinses or a toothbrush.

If you don't see continued improvement please call the studio.

Common temporary post-operative symptoms:

- Jaw stiffness with difficulty in opening.
- A slight earache on the side of the surgery.
- Your other teeth may ache. This is a "sympathetic" ache.

Bruising may occur on the face in the area of surgery. This should resolve itself in a few days.

Dry Socket: This is an occasional complication after tooth extraction, especially with 3rd molars (wisdom teeth) and lower teeth. It is caused by the blood clot dissolving too early and it is identified by increased discomfort after the first few days of normal healing. While this process is self-limiting, it can be uncomfortable. Please call our studio as soon as possible so we can relieve your discomfort.

Sharp Edges: If you feel something hard or a sharp edge in the surgical area it is likely you are feeling the bony walls that once supported the extracted tooth/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 studio.

Remember: you just had a surgical operation. Be kind to yourself.

It is our desire that your recovery is as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these simple instructions will assist you in your recovery. If you have any questions about your progress please call the studio.



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Out with the old!

What to do after your extraction





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Following your tooth extraction


Oral surgery wounds usually heal quickly and without complication. Sometimes the after effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all the following instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do, however, when in doubt follow these guidelines or call the studio for clarification.


The Day of Surgery


 **The First Few Hours:** 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 may be gently removed after one hour (the greater the surgical procedure, the longer the packs should remain in place). If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 to 60 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 minutes).

 **Wound Care:** A good blood clot will promote healing—please do not disturb the surgical site today. Do not rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth but be gentle and avoid the surgical area(s). Avoid vigorous exercise and alcohol for the first few days. If you smoke, please do not smoke for at least 48 hours, since this is detrimental to healing and can lead to a dry socket.

 **Stitches (Sutures):** These are sometimes placed in the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to aid healing. They can become dislodged however this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. Often sutures will feel as if they are tied to the cheek due to the associated swelling. Unless advised by the dentist any sutures will dissolve approximately one week after surgery.

 **Oozing:** Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Placing fresh gauze over the area and biting on it for 30 – 45 minutes at a time will often control this. It is a good idea to place a towel over your pillow when sleeping just in case.

 **Swelling:** Oral surgery is often associated with post-operative swelling. It can be minimised by using an ice pack wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek twenty minutes on, twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery.

 **Discomfort:** Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort depending on the procedure and patient. You may even have a prescription for medication to control this. Please take these tablets as directed. If you take the first pill before the anaesthetic has worn off you should be able to manage any discomfort better. Standard Ibuprofen (Neurofen/Advil) and Panadol are usually the best analgesics.

Remember that the most severe discomfort is usually within the first six hours of the local anaesthetic wearing off, after that your need for medication should lessen with time. If you find yourself needing to take large doses at frequent intervals please call the studio. Also remember some medication can affect your ability to drive.



Diet:

Eat any nourishing food that can be taken comfortably. Avoid extremely hot or cold foods and do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is usually advisable to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, custard, yoghurt, shakes etc) and avoid hard foods that may become lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to more solid foods. If you are diabetic maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your dentist.

