



**Lowell & Nashua
Oral Surgery Associates
Chelmsford Oral Surgery**

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ORAL SURGERY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOME CARE

Swelling and Bruising

Swelling and bruising may increase during the first 48 hours following surgery. Swelling may last 4 to 5 days. The following measures will help to minimize and reduce swelling and bruising:

- **Elevation** - Keep your head elevated at all times. Sleep on an extra pillow to help minimize swelling and bruising.
- **Ice** - Ice will help cut down on swelling during the first 48 hours. Apply a bag of ice or cold pack wrapped in a towel to the outside of your face against the surgical area for 20 minutes out of each hour, rather than continuously, for the first 48 hours after surgery. Bags of frozen peas or corn also work well, and mold easily against the face.
- **Heat** - After the first 48 hours have passed, your swelling will slowly begin to go down. Warm compresses can then be used to help to bring down the swelling. Use these for 20 minutes out of each hour.

Pain

NOTE: Photo ID will be required to pick up medication from your pharmacy

You may be given a prescription for pain medication or instructed to take over-the-counter medication. It is important that medication be taken as directed. Do not take any pain medication on an empty stomach, as most pain medication will irritate the stomach. If you are given a prescription for pain, you may find that within a day or two following surgery you don't need anything quite as strong. If so, please switch to an over-the-counter medication. You should notice decreasing discomfort every day. While you are taking pain medications, avoid alcohol and use care when driving or operating machinery. Take your medication only as prescribed and directed by the doctor. Refills for pain medication will be provided only during regular office hours, Monday through Friday.

Anti-Inflammatories

If you were given a prescription for Motrin, keep in mind that this is a "non-steroidal anti-inflammatory." Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications such as Advil, Aleve, non-prescription Motrin or Ibuprofen must not be taken with these.

Antibiotics

If you are given a prescription for antibiotics after surgery, it is important to take **ALL** of your antibiotics.

Dry Socket

The blood clot at the surgical site may be lost, causing a dry socket, usually on the third to fifth day. You will feel persistent pain in the jaw area, often radiating toward the ear and forward along the jaw, which may cause pain in other teeth. Please call the office to report these symptoms.

Bleeding

Bite firmly on gauze, and change gauze every ½ hour until it becomes blood-tinged saliva. It is not unusual to have blood-tinged saliva for 24 to 48 hours after surgery.

Blood Clots

During the first stage of healing, a blood clot will form at the extraction site. In order for proper healing to occur, it is important that this blood clot be maintained. NOTE: You may not smoke or use a straw for 48 hours after surgery. The suction created will dislodge the clot and delay healing.

Sedation and Anesthesia

Patients who have general anesthesia may experience some memory loss following surgery. Because of this, a patient should not be left alone or drive a motor vehicle on the day of surgery. After anesthesia, you may experience a sore throat and/or muscle stiffness. This will disappear within 48 hours.

Nausea and Vomiting

You may experience nausea and vomiting after surgery due to the anesthesia, medications or blood you may have swallowed. If this occurs, try taking an over-the-counter medication such as Maalox, Mylanta, or Pepto Bismol. If the problem persists, call the office.

Hygiene

The day after surgery you should begin rinsing after eating and before going to bed, with a solution of 1 part hydrogen peroxide and 2 parts water or a warm salt water rinse, to keep the surgical site clean. You should continue these rinses for 1 or 2 weeks or as long as there is an open area where food and bacteria can become trapped. The teeth and gums adjacent to the surgical site may be tender for a day or two following surgery. Avoid these areas during brushing and flossing until they become more comfortable.

Sutures

If you have sutures, it will take up to 10-14 days for them to dissolve.

Diet

On the day of surgery, you should follow a liquid or soft diet, eating only cold or lukewarm foods. Avoid hot foods or liquids. After the first 24 hours, you may start returning to a normal diet. However, please avoid hard and crunchy foods such as popcorn, pretzels and granola for one week following the procedure.

When to Contact Us

Please let us know if you experience heavy bleeding or increased pain and/or swelling after the first 48 hours, or if you run a temperature over 101, or have persistent nausea and vomiting.

Contact us with any questions or concerns.

After Office Hours

If you have an emergency or need to speak with your doctor after hours, please contact our answering service at (978) 988-1844, and one of our doctors will return your call.