



## Wisdom Tooth Removal

The removal of impacted teeth is a serious surgical procedure. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

### **Immediately Following Surgery**

The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be kept in place for half hour. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and replaced with a fresh gauze pad every half hour or as needed.

Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged. Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as you begin to feel discomfort. This will usually coincide with local anesthetic becoming diminished.

Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable. Place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for explanation.

### **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 keeping a steady pressure on the bleeding area by biting firmly on the gauze placed there by your doctor. Pressure helps reduce bleeding and permits formation of a clot in the tooth socket. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bags helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. You may replace gauze as needed, but be aware that the more you change out the gauze you may remove clotting that is needed and prolong healing.

After 24 hours some oozing of blood may persist. If necessary, resume use of sterile gauze pads. If bleeding does not subside, call for further instructions.

### **Swelling**

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face are not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following the 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. Two baggies filled with ice, or ice packs (covered with a soft cloth to avoid skin irritation) should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be applied 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off. After 24 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery. Twenty-four hours following surgery the application of moist heat to the sides of face is beneficial in reducing the size of swelling.

## **Pain**

For moderate pain, one or two tablets of Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol may be taken every three to four hours or Ibuprofen, (Motrin or Advil) two to four 200mg tablets may be taken every 3-4 hours.

For severe pain take the tablets prescribed for pain as directed. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Unusual side effects to the pain medication should be reported to your doctor. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office.

## **Diet**

After general anesthetic or I.V. Sedation liquids should be taken first. **Do not use straws.** Drink from a glass. 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. Spicy foods, citrus, juices, and food with seeds can irritate the extraction sites and should be avoided. 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. Therefore, immediately following surgery, if you are lying down, make sure you sit for one minute before standing.

## **Keep the Mouth Clean**

No rinsing of any kind should be done 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. Resume your regular habits of oral hygiene, but avoid disturbing the surgical site so not to loosen or remove the blood clot.

## **Discoloration**

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post operatively. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

## **Antibiotics**

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

## **Nausea and Vomiting**

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on 7-Up, tea, or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a fifteen minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin solid food and the prescribed medicine.

## **Other Complications**

If numbness of the lip, shin, or tongue occurs there is not cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb you could bite it and not feel it so be careful. Call Dr. McRae if you have any questions about this.

Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.

Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed by Dr. McRae.

If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as Vaseline.

Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.

Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

## **Finally**

Doctor may place sutures in the area of surgery. They may be permanent or dissolvable sutures. Sutures are in the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged; this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. If permanent sutures are placed, they will be removed approximately one week after surgery. The removal of sutures requires no anesthesia or needles. It takes only a minute or so, and there is no discomfort associated with this procedure. If dissolvable they will dissolve within the next week to two weeks.

The pain and swelling should subside more and more each day following the surgery. If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur call our office immediately.

There will be a cavity where the tooth was removed. The cavity will gradually over the next month fill in with the new tissue. The area should be kept clean especially after meals with warm salt water rinses or a toothbrush.

Your case is individual, no two mouths are alike. Well intended advice from friends may not always apply for you. Please call Dr. McRae to discuss any problems with your recovery.

Brushing your teeth is permissible-as long as you are able to avoid the surgical site as much as possible.

A dry socket is when the blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and even pain to ear may occur 3-4 days following surgery. Call the office if this occurs.

If you are involved in regular exercise be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. This may cause you to get lightheaded and feel weak. If this happens please stop exercising if this happens.

**1067 S. Wells St.\* Meridian, Idaho \* (208) 895-8486 \* fax (208) 895-8540**