

## **Post-Op Instructions for Oral Surgery**

Medical Telecommunications is our answer service. They answer our phones after business hours and on weekends to help communicate your medical concerns or emergencies to Dr. Catalano.

For medical concerns or emergencies after hours, call **303-768-8222**. For a **life-threatening** emergency please call **911**.

If you do not receive a call from Dr. Catalano within 20-30 minutes, please call again and ask they ring his cell phone.

Keep in mind, narcotic prescriptions WILL NOT be phoned in after hours or over the weekend, NO EXCEPTIONS. Pain medicine prescriptions can only be given in the office during regular business hours and not in the evening or over weekends. The answering service cannot make or reschedule appointments or answer billing questions.

### **On the Day of Surgery (Upon Discharge) (Day 1):**

You will be discharged from the office biting firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical sites. The extraction sites should be covered with gauze for a minimum of 1 hour. To help keep gauze securely in place over the surgical sites, minimize talking while gauze is in the mouth. You will receive a package of 3x3 inch gauze pads. Open package and remove 2 squares for each area, where a tooth has been removed. Fold the pads into a tight ball and place the pads over the extraction site/s and close firmly. It is best not to change gauze packs more than once every 45-60 minutes. If your wisdom teeth were removed, it may be beneficial to keep the sites covered with gauze most of the first day. Remove the gauze to have something to eat/drink, and then replace the gauze until all bleeding or oozing has completely stopped.

The first food eaten after tooth removal should be a cool/room temperature snack. This can be done 30 minutes to an hour after arriving home.

Pain medicine should be taken within 1-3 hours after arriving home and we recommend an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication first, such as Advil, Motrin, or generic Ibuprofen (unless you are allergic to Aspirin or Ibuprofen or are on blood thinners). The usual adult dose is 600mg (3-200mg tablets). This may be repeated every 4 to 6 hours while awake, or up to 5 times within a 24-hour period. Prescription pain medicine should be taken only between the doses of the Advil/Ibuprofen only as needed. Narcotic prescription pain medicine should always be taken after a meal or snack to avoid possible nausea. Prescription pain medicine causes drowsiness and may cause lightheadedness and you should be at rest for 4-6 hours after using this medication. NEVER mix alcohol or other sedative medications (sleeping aids, anti-anxiety medicines) with prescription pain medication.

Your antibiotic (if prescribed) may be started anytime the first day or evening, unless instructed otherwise by Dr Catalano.

Keep your head elevated. DO NOT lay flat during the first day, and we recommend staying propped up even while sleeping during the first 48 hours (first 2 nights).

Ice packs are beneficial after most tooth removals. We recommend ice over each area/side for 15-minute intervals (for wisdom teeth, 15 minutes per side) each hour on the day of surgery, and the day after surgery. Keeping the head elevated as above, and consistent use of ice packs can significantly reduce swelling and discomfort. Maximum swelling occurs 48-72 hours after surgery.

### **Diet:**

Your diet for the first day should be cool and soft. Ice cream, yogurt, pudding snacks, Jell-O, apple sauce and smoothies are all good examples. Meal-type foods such as soups, mashed potatoes, cream of wheat, eggs, well-cooked pasta/ramen,

rice, oatmeal or macaroni and cheese later in the day and thereafter are fine however should be room temperature the first two days. If your wisdom teeth were removed, avoid all firm or chewy foods, temperature hot, spicy hot, carbonated beverages, and use of straws for at least one week.

### **Things to Avoid:**

- No rinsing the mouth for 24 hours after tooth removal. We recommend waiting to brush and rinse for a full 24 hours after surgery.
- Smoking should be avoided the day of surgery and preferably for 5 days after surgery.
- Exertional activity (sports, exercise, heavy lifting) should be avoided for one week especially after removal of multiple teeth or wisdom teeth.
- Avoid touching extraction sites with your tongue or fingers, which will further irritate or inflame the tissues or damage sutures.

### **Keep in Mind:**

- The more docile and restful you are during the first 48 hours post operatively, the better you will feel and the faster your recovery will be.
- It is not uncommon to experience a low-grade temperature elevation (99-100.5 F') during the first 48 hours following surgery. If your temperature is higher and/or persists past 48 hours, please call the office.

### **The Next Day (Day 2):**

For the removal of multiple teeth or wisdom teeth, you should remain home and resting.

For the removal of baby teeth or single adult extractions, back to school/work or light activities are ok, however, exercise, sports, heavy lifting should still be avoided.

### **Oral Care:**

Starting 24 hours after surgery, you should gently brush your teeth, carefully staying on the teeth and not brushing off onto the gums or cheeks. Brush all teeth EXCEPT the teeth next to the surgical sites. Begin gentle warm saltwater rinses and rinse every 2 hours through out the day (5-6 times per day while awake). An 8 oz. cup of water (preferably distilled) with ½ tsp of salt will make a great rinse. The rinses should be VERY gentle for the next 2 days and should gradually become more vigorous throughout the week and until you are seen for a post-operative visit. Avoid commercial mouthwash for one week.

### **Diet:**

For the removal of multiple teeth or wisdom teeth, your diet should remain the same as that for day 1.

For the removal of single adult teeth or baby teeth, you may increase your diet to semi-soft and semi-bland avoiding the chewiest foods, or foods that are very temperature/spicy hot. Carbonated beverages and straws should be avoided for one week.

### **Days 3-7:**

Back to work or school should be fine, however, remember to avoid overly exertional activity. Be advised that if you continue to use prescription pain medicine on day 3 or thereafter, you should not drive or operate machinery and should likely not return school/work as these medications cause drowsiness. Your diet should remain soft (relatively "non-chew") however, your meal-type foods can be warm. Be sure to continue your rinses and antibiotics (if prescribed) on schedule. If you are unable to use salt water, tap or bottled water is ok.

If it feels as if a suture has come loose or has been lost, do not be alarmed. We most commonly use dissolvable sutures that loosen and fall out between 3-10 days after surgery. Dr. Catalano commonly places more than are needed in the surgical area in the event a suture loosens early. If you have concerns at anytime please call the office or page Dr. Catalano.

Remember to try to avoid touching the surgical areas with your tongue, however, if you feel something hard or sharp, you may be feeling the bony walls which originally supported the tooth or small spicules of bone which may work themselves out from the tooth site during the first several weeks after a tooth is removed. They are not tooth fragments that were left in. These areas are evaluated at your post-operative visit.