

# Instructions following Wisdom Teeth Removal

## Home Care

1. **Bite on gauze firmly for about 2 hours**, changing every 20 minutes or when gauze becomes saturated. The main bleeding will usually last 1-4 hours, but don't be alarmed if oozing continues. You can expect slight oozing for up to 24 - 48 hours. When resting today, keep your head slightly elevated using two pillows. Lying down flat or trying to get up too soon will cause more bleeding, swelling and light-headedness.
2. **Apply ice packs to areas of surgery for the first 48 – 72 hours following surgery.** On the third to fifth days following surgery, apply heat to the swollen areas as often and as long as possible until swelling disappears. Either moist or dry heat will help.
3. **Do not rinse the mouth for 24 hours.** After 24 hours you may start rinsing with warm salt-water rinses (1 teaspoon salt to 1 cup of water). Use lukewarm water. Rinse several times a day as necessary until healing is complete. **DO NOT SWISH!** Fill your mouth with water and turn your head from side to side. Allow the water to fall into the sink – do not spit aggressively. (Follow this procedure for the first seven days). Do your best to brush your teeth. It will be uncomfortable for about one week.

If you must rinse during the first 24 hours, please do so gently and rarely.

4. **For 2 – 3 days following surgery, A LIQUID DIET IS BEST. Focus on eating foods that do not require chewing and do not use a straw.** After day 1, be sure to rinse *gently* after each meal (as directed in #3). Gradually return to a normal diet by day seven. Soft foods packed into the tooth socket will cause pain and infection.

### Try to eat foods like these during the first 2 – 3 days after surgery:

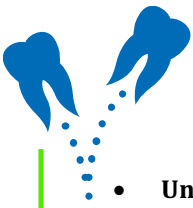
Smoothies (w/o seeds)	Mashed Potatoes	Instant Breakfast
Liquid Nutrition Drinks	Soup	Cream Soups
Yogurt	Apple Sauce	Broth
Pudding	Popsicles	<del>Baby Food</del>
Jell-O	Ice Cream	Water

5. **Pick up the prescriptions on your way home or as soon as possible.** Take the tablets with food. Follow instructions outline on handout titled *Instructions for Using Medications*.
6. **Your stitches will dissolve and fall out on their own in 2 – 4 days.** If they fall out sooner, this is fine. Please don't worry. If they are still in place after one week, try rinsing vigorously for a few seconds. If the stitches will not come out, please call our office for a removal appointment.

## Solutions for common problems following surgery

In case of extreme pain, uncontrollable bleeding, or any unusual disturbances, please call our emergency number. However, some of the most common postoperative problems can be easily dealt with at home.

- **Bleeding will not stop...**See #1 above. Be sure that gauze, towels, or something absorbent is placed over the surgical site and bite down firmly. Maintain for 10 -15 minutes, change gauze and repeat. A washrag soaked in ice water and rung out can be very effective.



- **Uncontrolled pain...**Wisdom Tooth Removal is a complex surgery involving skin, muscle, bone and nerves. Postoperative pain and discomfort are normal and part of recovery. Here are some suggestions for relieving pain.
  - ✓ Your pain medication will help relieve post-operative pain. *Use it as directed.* Please take your pain medications as indicated and get plenty of rest.
  - ✓ Use the provided schedule to make sure you take your medications *on time.*
  - ✓ Always wake up or have someone wake you to take your medication *on time.*
  - ✓ During the first three days after surgery, ice packs placed on the cheeks can help with post-op pain.
- **Vomiting...**Unfortunately, vomiting can be a side effect of IV anesthesia and post-operative pain medication. However, it does very little to harm the surgical site. Vomiting will normally cause the sockets to begin to bleed. Gently rinse your mouth and place gauze packs over surgical sites and bite down. Refer to #1 on the opposite side of this page.

## Dry Socket

Dry Socket is a common problem following wisdom teeth removal. Although it can happen with any tooth extraction, it is commonly seen after removal of lower wisdom teeth. The problem arises because the normal blood clot that first forms in the extraction socket is subsequently lost, leaving the socket empty or “dry.” Exposed nerve endings inside the socket can cause pain felt in the jaws, the adjacent teeth, the ear (earache), and/or the temple (headache).

To avoid dry socket, please remember the following:

- ✓ NO SMOKING FOR 5-7 DAYS. Smoking will cause dry socket nearly 100% of the time.
- ✓ LIQUID DIET. Please follow the recommendation given in #4 on the other side of this page.
- ✓ TAKE PAIN MEDICATION AS INDICATED.
- ✓ NO INTENSE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR 5-7 DAYS.

Pain that increases three days after tooth extraction and that typically becomes severe and unrelenting is the best sign of dry socket. If you experience this type of pain, **call our After Surgical Care Number (801) 372-1416.**

## Infection or Swelling after 7 days

Swelling or pain in the area of the extractions that begins between 10 days after surgery and 12 months after surgery is not uncommon. **Call our After Surgical Care Number immediately** if swelling, pus or pain returns at any time in the next 12 months. Treatment will be completed in our office at no additional charge to you.

## After Hours Assistance

This is not an emergency number. If you are concerned about the immediate health of the person you are caring for, please call 911 or take them to the emergency room. This number is answered by assistants in our office as a courtesy to our patients to help clarify instructions. If no one answers, please leave a detailed message including the patient’s name, date of surgery and your question. You may also send text messages to this number. Please be courteous and your call will be returned at the earliest convenience of the staff member responding. Do not expect calls to be returned after 10pm or before 9am. PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTION SHEET AGAIN.

The number is : **(801) 372-1416**

Witness Name:	Date:
Signature:	