

**GENERAL POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORAL SURGERY INCLUDING:
EXTRACTIONS, BONE GRAFT, & IMPLANT PLACEMENT:**

- Many patients want to know what is “normal” after an extraction (or other surgical procedure). Please use the following information as a guideline, but feel free to contact us if you have concerns:
 - **BLEEDING:** It is normal to bleed, especially on the day of the extraction. Keep pressure on the gauze placed at the extraction site for one hour; if bleeding continues, replace the gauze with clean gauze and apply pressure for another hour while avoiding heat and exertion. Do not be alarmed if your saliva is colored red; a drop of blood in your saliva can appear to be excessive bleeding. It is common for the extraction site to ooze blood for a variable period of time after the extraction. If you had multiple or difficult extractions, take blood thinners, take certain OTC medications like ibuprofen regularly, or are an older adult, your post-operative bleeding may be greater.
 - **BRUISING/SWELLING:** It is normal to bruise around the area of the extraction, especially in fair-skinned patients or those who are older or on blood thinners. The bruising is simply blood that has collected under the skin. It is not an indication of “rough” handling during the extraction. Likewise, swelling is part of the body’s normal healing response, but excessive swelling can be avoided by applying a cold pack to the area and resting.
 - **PAIN:** A certain amount of soreness or pain following an extraction is normal. The intensity and duration of the pain can vary based on the patient and the number of teeth extracted and/or difficulty of the extractions. If indicated, you may have been prescribed prescription pain medication. Take this as directed for pain. Avoid taking this medication on an empty stomach to avoid nausea. For many patients, over the counter pain relievers like ibuprofen are adequate to manage post-operative pain.
 - **BONE FRAGMENTS:** During the healing process, small bone fragments may work their way to the surface. This is a normal part of the healing process and your bone remodels at the extraction site. Many patients mistake this for a portion of a tooth because the color of bone and tooth are similar. If the loose bone fragments become bothersome, you can contact us to discuss removal.
- **REST:** Go home and rest after picking up any prescriptions. You will experience fewer post-operative complications if you avoid heat and physical exertion in the 24-48 hours after the extraction(s). Your rest time may be longer if you had many extractions, or if the extractions were difficult or on impacted teeth (like wisdom teeth). Older patients and those on blood thinners may also require a longer rest period. If your job involves working in the heat and/or physical exertion, please consider taking time off following your procedure.
- **APPLY PRESSURE:** Bite firmly on the gauze placed at the extraction site for 1 hour. It is not necessary to continually change out the gauze; they will become saturated with blood and saliva. It is the pressure (and not the dry-ness of the gauze) against the extraction site that encourages clotting.
- Your lips, cheeks, and tongue may be numb for up to 8 hours following your extraction. Please take care not to bite the soft tissue of your mouth while you are numb.
- **DIET:** It is best to consume cold beverages and soft foods no hotter than room temperature on the day of the extraction(s) and avoid drinking through a straw. Recommendations for post-operative consumption include the following when served lukewarm (not hot): scrambled eggs, oatmeal, pudding or yogurt, bananas, applesauce, mashed potatoes, pasta, and cold noncarbonated liquids. Avoid hot coffee, carbonated sodas, and alcohol.
- **SUTURES:** It is not always necessary to place sutures at an extraction site. If you have had sutures (stitches) placed at the extraction site, you may need to return in 7-14 days to have them removed. (However, some sutures dissolve on their own without removal; if your dentist placed dissolvable sutures, you will be informed that you do not need to return for removal.)
- **DO NOT SMOKE!!!** We cannot overemphasize the importance of retraining from smoking as long as possible after your extractions. Refraining from smoking is especially critical to your healing in the first 2 weeks after the extraction. In addition to significantly impeding the healing process post-extraction, smoking is deleterious to every organ system in your body; as always, we encourage our patients who are smokers to consider permanent cessation of tobacco use.
- There are times when, during the extraction of upper back teeth, the sinus needs time to repair. If this was the case in your extraction, please avoid playing wind instruments or blowing your nose forcefully for the next 1-2 weeks.
- Your oral hygiene is important; however, in the days following an extraction, you want to take care to not clean vigorously around the area of the extraction. It is normal for food to accumulate in the depressed area of the extraction site; gentle rinsing should dislodge it. Do not “pick” food particles out of the socket. You also need to avoid vigorous rinsing and spitting.
- Take any prescriptions that were given to you as directed. If you were given a prescription pain medication or are a sedation patient, do not drive or operate dangerous machinery while under the influence of the medication. If you experience itching, hives, or difficulty breathing, this can be an indication of a previously unidentified allergic reaction. If this occurs, stop taking the medication(s) immediately and (in the case of a mild reaction that is not life threatening) contact our office. In the case of a life threatening reaction, especially those that involve breathing, call 911.
- If you were sedated during your extraction(s) or had other procedures performed during your visit, you must also follow all additional post-operative instructions given for those procedures.
- Follow any additional instructions given by your dentist, and return for any scheduled postoperative visits. Feel free to call our office at 706-857-4850 if you have any questions or concerns.