

**Postoperative Instructions:**

Congratulations on having gotten through your extractions. Now, you are entering the recovery phase of your treatment which is equally as important. There are certain guidelines to follow to ensure that your recovery is uneventful.

1. Be patient with your recovery and give yourself adequate time for healing. We find that most people will take the remainder of the day off from school or work, and also will take one additional day. Generally, the first 48hrs after the procedure are the most difficult, and full recovery can be expected on average around 10-14 days. Keep in mind, everyone has their own timeline when it comes to healing.
2. Immediately after the procedure, you will have gauze in your mouth at the surgical sites. This gauze plays a very important role in helping to control the bleeding and also allowing for a clot to form. That clot will ultimately allow your normal tissues to develop around it. Remember, the clot is easy to dislodge and any negative pressure can quickly lead to loss of the clot and renewal of bleeding. Things to avoid include: swishing vigorously, straws, spitting, brushing directly on the surgical sites.
3. Make sure the gauze has enough bulk, and the gauze needs to be placed directly over the surgical site. We will provide gauze at the end of your visit to help you get started with your recovery, but we encourage you to get more at your local drugstore. A general guideline for exchanging out the gauze is every 20 minutes.
4. Cold therapy or ice packs can be used to help reduce the swelling and diminish the pain. We recommend limiting the application of ice to 15-minute intervals. Many will alternate from one side to the other every 15 minutes. After 48 hours, stop using ice, as it has shown little benefit.
5. Try to keep your head elevated at all times. This will allow gravity to assist you in reducing the swelling. Even when in a lying position, try to keep the head elevated at about 45 degrees. Pillows or cushions can help achieve this.
6. In terms of diet, we recommend starting slowly. Start with liquids and see how you feel. If you are able to tolerate liquids, advance to soft, easily digestible foods. Eventually you will be back to eating your normal diet. The rule of thumb is to listen to your body, as it will let you know what you can tolerate. Generally, we recommend you eat at a slower pace and with more control and deliberation. We want to avoid getting any food particles into the surgical site as this can lead to infection. Also, your gum tissue will be quite raw for a week, so avoid hot, cold and spicy foods during the recovery.
7. Taking time to rest can lead to a swifter recovery. We encourage you to reduce your physical activity. Things to avoid are: no heavy lifting, no strenuous exercising, no contact sports.
8. After the procedure, you may experience some numbness in the area of the surgery. This usually will wear off in about 2 hours. If the numbness persists, give us a call.
9. Unfortunately, discomfort will be a part of your recovery. Be patient with yourself as you go through this process. We will provide you with prescription pain medications. Be sure to follow the instructions given with the medications. The general recommendation is use care when taking any narcotics, particularly as it relates to overuse (use sparingly). It is okay to not take any narcotics and rely solely on Motrin for pain relief.
10. Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large volume of water can reduce nausea. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better.

11. If you feel something hard or sharp edges in the surgical areas, it is likely you are feeling the bony walls that once supported the extracted teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If they cause concern or discomfort, please call the office.
12. If you received antibiotics, take the full prescribed course as directed.
13. Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first two days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office.
14. In most cases, if used, the sutures are resorbable (dissolvable) and will resorb (dissolve) within 7-14 days. Do not disrupt the sutures in place. If non-resorbable sutures were used, the surgeon will advise you to return for their removal within approximately 7-14 days.
15. Beginning on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day, start stretching exercises to regain full opening of your mouth. With opposing fingers, gently apply pressure to the upper and lowers jaws. Try to do this 2-3 times daily, until you regain full opening.



It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call or text at any time.

Please call or text: (310) 770-7244