



# MODERN SMILES

## Post Operative Instructions following tooth extraction

**Anesthetics:** The length of time you experience numbness varies depending on the type of anesthetic you have received. While your mouth is numb, be careful not to bite your cheek, lip, or tongue. The numbness from the anesthetic should subside within a few hours. Drowsiness may persist for several hours following sedation; this is normal. Be aware that pain control prescriptions may also cause drowsiness. If you are drowsy, DO NOT operate any vehicle, device, machinery or make any important decisions.

**Bleeding:** We will place a gauze pack in the extraction site to limit bleeding and confine the blood while clotting takes place. Remain biting on the gauze pad in your mouth for thirty (30) minutes. DO NOT chew on the pack. Change the pad every thirty (30) minutes, or as needed, until the bleeding stops by folding a piece of gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on. Place the pad directly on the extraction site. Maintain biting pressure for thirty (30) minutes. If the pad becomes soaked, replace it with a clean one as necessary. DO NOT lie down until the bleeding has stopped. If the bleeding continues after the above measures, soak a tea bag then wrap it in gauze, place it firmly in the area of bleeding. On top of this, place gauze and apply pressure by closing the teeth together. Do not become excited, but lie down with the head elevated on three pillows. Apply an ice bag to the cheek and avoid hot liquids. DO NOT suck on the extraction site. Blood streaked saliva may persist for twenty-four (24) hours or more; this is normal. If bleeding is excessive during the night and you are concerned, please call the office at the phone number listed above. If unable to contact the office, go to the nearest hospital emergency room for treatment. (Remember that a lot of saliva and a little blood can LOOK like a lot of blood).

**Swelling:** Facial swelling is normal following most extractions. You can help reduce swelling and pain by applying cold compresses to the face for twenty (20) minutes on and five (5) minutes off for the first 24 hours. Apply warm compress the next day for 24 to 48 hours as necessary. Sit with your head elevated and sleep with 2-3 pillows. Swelling normally increases for 3 days and begins to subside about the fifth day.

**Pain:** You may take pain medication as directed by your doctor. If the medication prescribed does not seem to work for you DO NOT increase the dosage. If you have prolonged severe pain, swelling, bleeding, or fever, please follow the directions listed under "EMERGENCY" below.

**Rinsing:** DO NOT rinse, spit, smoke or suck through a straw until the next morning. These activities may dislodge the blood clot, start bleeding, and delay healing. If you are unable to rinse the food particles out of the wound, a syringe may be provided by the office if needed during your post-op appointment in a week. Begin brushing thoroughly after meals, the next day. DO NOT rinse with any mouthwash until after your post-operative appointment.

**Oral Hygiene:** You may resume brushing your teeth using care in the surgical areas the morning following surgery. Use a soft bristled brush so that you do not injure the tissues in your mouth. The tongue should be brushed to help eliminate bad breath and the unpleasant taste that is common after an extraction. Gently rinse your mouth with warm water (1/2 teaspoon of salt to a large glass of water). You should rinse with this warm salt solution in the morning, after every meal and before bed. Rinsing after each meal is important to keep food particles out of the extraction site. Remember to rinse gently and avoid using commercial mouthwash or mouth rinse during the healing period.

**Diet:** A good diet is essential following surgery. Initially, soft foods high in nutritional value are recommended. Return to a normal diet as soon as possible. Stay with cool or lukewarm foods. Fluid intake following surgery should be increased with emphasis on water and fruit juices. DO NOT suck fluids through a straw.

**Smoking/Drinking:** DO NOT smoke or drink alcoholic beverages for at least (3) days following your surgery. Smoking greatly slows the healing process and is the major cause of dry sockets, a very painful complication.

**Other Possible Side Effects:** There may be a slight elevation of temperature for 24-48 hours. If a temperature continues, notify the office. There may be a slight earache. If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack – keep the area moist with cream or ointment such as Vaseline or Neosporin. Your other teeth may ache temporarily (sympathetic pain). Stiffness of the jaw – use a warm compress and massage the jaw to help relax the tension.

**Emergency:** If following surgery you feel the need for emergency treatment, please (1) come to our office if it is during office hours, (2) if the office is closed, call the office to get the emergency number to reach the dentist or (3) if you are unable to contact the dentist go the nearest hospital emergency room for treatment.