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Oral and Maxillofacial surgery

AFTER WISDOM TEETH REMOVAL

The removal of impacted wisdom teeth is a serious surgical procedure. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY:

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be kept in place for a half hour. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed, and a new pad placed until no bleeding is present.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery should be avoided; this may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- Take the prescribed medications as soon as you begin to feel discomfort this will usually coincide with the local anesthetic becoming diminished.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.
- Place ice packs to the side of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for explanation.

BLEEDING

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery.

Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled first by rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for thirty minutes. Repeat if necessary. If the bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, call the office for further instructions.

SWELLING

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Two baggies filled with ice, or ice packs should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left on continuously while you are awake. After 36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery. Thirty-six hours following surgery the application of moist heat to the sides of the face is beneficial in reducing the size of the swelling.

PAIN

you should begin to take medication as soon as you feel the local anesthetic wearing off. For moderate pain, 1 or 2 Tylenol or extra strength Tylenol may be taken every 3-4 hours. Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin)

may be taken instead of Tylenol if you are able. Ibuprofen bought over the counter comes in 200mg tablets: 2-4 tablets may be taken every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.

(1) 800mg Ibuprofen + (1) 500mg Tylenol- the combination of ibuprofen and acetaminophen works better than the combination of an opioid drug and acetaminophen for the relief of pain from dental procedures

For severe pain, the prescription medication should be taken as directed. Do not take any of the above medication if you are allergic or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office.

DIET

After general anesthetic, or I.V. sedation, liquids should be taken at first. Do **NOT** use straws. Drink from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Nourishment should be taken regularly. You should prevent dehydration by taking fluids regularly. Your food intake may be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. At least 5-6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat.

KEEP THE MOUTH CLEAN

No rinsing of any kind should be done until the day following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse gently. The day after surgery (24 hours after) you should begin rinsing at least 5-6m times a day, especially after eating, with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt.

DISCOLORATION

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post-operatively. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

ANTIBIOTICS

If you have been placed on antibiotics take them as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent infections. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or any other unfavorable reaction and call the office.

NAUSEA and VOMITING

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on coke, tea, or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a 15-minute period. When the nausea subsides, you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine.

OTHER COMPLICATIONS

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. This is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb you could bite it and not feel, so be careful. Call the office if you have any questions.
- Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temp persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.
- You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. As you were not able to eat or drink prior to surgery and it is difficult to take fluids, and pain medication can make you dizzy. You could get lightheaded when you stand up suddenly. Before standing up, you should sit up for one minute, then get up.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are the bony walls which supported the tooth, these projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed by Dr. Meeks.
- If the corners of your mouth were stretched, they may dry out and crack. You can use an ointment, such as Vaseline to keep lips moist.
- Sore throat and pain when swallowing is not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.
- Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

Finally

Sutures, if used, are placed in the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sutures are resorbable and do not need to be removed. They will dissolve on their own in about 7-10 days.

- The pain and swelling should subside more and more each day following surgery. If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur, please call the office for instructions.
- There will be a cavity where the tooth was removed. The cavity will gradually over the next month fill in with new tissue. In the meantime, the area should be kept clean, especially after meals with saltwater rinses or a toothbrush.
- Your case is individual, no 2 mouths are alike. Do not take seriously well intended advice from friends. Discuss your problem with the persons best able to effectively help you, Dr. Meeks and staff, or a family dentist.
- Brushing your teeth is excellent, just be gentle around the surgical sites.
- A dry socket is when the blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and even pain to the ear may occur 2-3 days following surgery. Call the office if this occurs.

***In case of emergency please call our Virginia Beach office at 757-499-5909 or our Chesapeake office at 757-548-1712.**

***** After hours emergency 757-323-9476. Office hours are Monday-Friday 9am-4:30pm*****