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Post Extraction Home Care Instructions

General – After any surgical procedure performed in the mouth, one can expect **some** bleeding, **some** swelling, **some** discomfort. Those occurrences will be minimized if these instructions are followed carefully.

Swelling – Apply an ice pack to the face at the surgical area for 15 minutes, then remove it for 15 minutes; (not longer than 20 min.). Repeat this cycle for at least the next two hours, although it can be continued longer through the evening (except when sleeping). This will minimize swelling.

Bleeding – After an extraction, you'll be asked to bite on a piece of gauze for about 20 minutes to put pressure on the area for the blood to clot. The area may still bleed minimally for the next 24 hours or so. Before getting concerned, remember that the mouth and its wounds are constantly washed by saliva. What may appear to be excessive blood loss is more likely to be a lot of saliva tinged with a small amount of blood. If active bleeding occurs after the first hour, place a rolled tissue or gauze, or a Lipton teabag over the bleeding area. Keep firm, constant pressure on the area for at least 15 minutes. If it continues, call the office. Bleeding is minimized by not spitting, talking or rinsing. Place a bath towel or plastic bag over the pillow, as drooling is likely while sleeping. Don't disturb the clot that forms on the wound.

Avoid - To prevent loss of the clot, you should not smoke, use a straw or spit after surgery for 2 days. These actions can pull the blood clot out of the hole where the tooth was, that can lead to a dry socket. It is most common when lower back teeth are removed and happens more often in smokers and women who take birth control pills. A sure sign of a dry socket is persistent, acute pain in the jaw.

Pain Medication - Most simple extractions do not cause much discomfort after the procedure. If you do not have medical interferences, over the counter medication should relieve your discomfort. Ibuprofen (i.e. Advil, Motrin) 800 mg every 8 hours usually will provide sufficient pain and swelling relief. Another good pain reliever (not for swelling) is acetaminophen (Tylenol). Be sure to take this medication with food. Because surgical extractions are more complicated, they generally cause more pain after the procedure. The level of discomfort and how long you have discomfort depend on the difficulty of the extraction. The Doctor may prescribe a prescription pain medication for a few days in addition to a Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID). Most post surgical pain disappears after a couple days. If you experience more intense pain, a stronger medication may be prescribed.

Antibiotics - Antibiotics may be prescribed for infection. All of this medication should be taken as directed unless an allergic reaction develops. If there are signs of an allergic reaction (i.e. rash, itching, unusual swelling), stop taking the medication immediately and call the office. If the reaction is severe (i.e. difficulty breathing), go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Alcohol - No alcoholic beverages should be consumed while taking these medications.

Oral Hygiene – Do not brush the teeth in the extraction area for 1 week, but do start to gently rinse as directed after 24 hours. Continue to brush and floss as usual outside the surgical area. A glass of warm water mixed with 1 teaspoon of salt is a good rinse for healing. You can do this every 3-4 hours especially after meals.

Food – Please avoid hot liquids or foods during the first 2 days. A light soft diet with plenty of liquids is recommended. Examples include milk shakes, ice cream, mashed potatoes, and pasta. Chew food on the opposite side of the surgical area. Be sure to drink plenty of water (8 glasses/day).

Sneezes/Nose Blowing - Upper back teeth are close to your sinuses. If you have had these teeth extracted, you may have a slight opening between your mouth and sinus. As a precaution, you should blow your nose very gently. Do not stifle or suppress sneezes.

Bone Fragments - During healing, you may notice small bone fragments working their way through the gums. We can easily remove them if they are too annoying.