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**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING DENTAL SURGERY**

**DO's**

1. **Gauze Instructions**—after surgery, the patient’s post-operative ride will be shown how to change the gauze and will be given post-operative irrigation instructions. Extra gauze will be provided for the patient to take home. It is recommended that the patient firmly bite down on the gauze while NOT TALKING. Change the gauze every 30-45 mins until bleeding slows. After about 2 hours, there will still be some red on the gauze; however, if patient is not still actively bleeding, stop using gauze.
2. Eat only cold and creamy foods the day of the surgery until the numbness wears off. Numbness might take up to 18 hours to wear off. Eating hot foods and soups while still numb can dislodge blood clots and burn the mouth.
3. Eat liquid/mushy foods for the first 7 days. Liquid/mushy foods are foods you can swallow WITHOUT CHEWING, such as: smoothies, mashed potatoes, pudding, applesauce, yogurt, Ensure, protein drinks, and milkshakes.
4. Use a spoon for eating...no straws/no spitting.
5. Have the patient read these instructions the day of the surgery and the day after.
6. Use medications as prescribed. Eat 15 minutes prior to taking pain medication and antibiotics in order to prevent nausea.
7. Rest for the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Patients who have sedation should refrain from driving an automobile or from engaging in any task that requires alertness for the first 24 hours after surgery.
8. Expect discomfort and swelling to peak on days 3 and 4. After day 4, the extractions site(s) should slowly decrease in discomfort every 2 days.
9. Return in 5-7 days for your post-op appointment.
10. Contact Dr. Ragsdale at 832-240-6778 if things are not improving week by week.

11. **Rinsing/Irrigation Instructions:**

**First 5 days after surgery:** Lightly swish the prescribed mouth rinse twice a day, and do not eat for 30 minutes after rinsing.  
**5 days after surgery:** Begin using irrigation syringe. Use prescribed mouth rinse or Listerine in irrigation syringe. Curved tip of syringe must go in the incision, which is located behind the back teeth between the teeth and the cheek, or in the visible hole left behind from the extraction site. Solution from irrigation syringe should be pushed with enough force to flush out debris from extraction site. It may help to take Advil or Ibuprofen 30-40 minutes before patient starts irrigation. Patients will typically start with prescribed mouth rinse, and then switch to Listerine once prescription is empty. Bleeding after irrigation is normal. Use syringe every day after each meal for each extraction site for 6-8 weeks to remove food from the holes. Holes will slowly close-up and get shallower over time.

**Important:** If patient feels that the pain has been tolerable but then suddenly begins to really hurt, in the majority of cases it means that the patient has food impaction in the extraction site and that patient should start to irrigate even as soon as the 4<sup>th</sup> day after surgery.

**NOTE:** Each extraction site is its own individual surgery, so there will likely be one site that hurts more while healing than the others (typically a lower/bottom site). If any of your surgery sites don't feel close to normal within 2 weeks, please call Dr. Ragsdale at 832-240-6778.

**Helpful how-to's for taking pain medications:**  
Advil (Ibuprofen) 600 mg = 3 over-the-counter pills  
**PLUS**  
Tylenol 500 mg = 1 extra strength pill **OR** Tylenol 3 (take as prescribed)  
*Note: Do NOT take more than 3000mg of Tylenol per day or more than 3200mg of Advil/Ibuprofen per day*

**DON'T's**

1. Don't hesitate to call Dr. Ragsdale at 832-240-6778 if things are not improving week-by-week and if surgery sites don't feel close to normal within 2 weeks.
2. Don't change out gauze all day long.
3. Don't sleep, eat, or drink with gauze in your mouth. THIS IS A CHOKING HAZARD!
4. Don't leave the patient alone for the first 24 hours—especially with gauze in his/her mouth.
5. Don't allow patient to drive the day of surgery.
6. Don't chew for the first 7 days while eating.
7. Don't smoke, vape, or drink alcohol for 7 full days. Do not use smokeless tobacco (dip) for at least the first 2 weeks.
8. Don't exercise for 4 full days.
9. Don't blow your nose or hold in a sneeze for first 7 days.
10. Don't miss or skip your post-op appointment 5-7 days after surgery.

**For additional information, check out our post-operative videos online at:**  
[www.drragsdale.com](http://www.drragsdale.com) → Click on “Watch Our Videos”