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Post operative instructions for extraction patients. (PLEASE READ)

BLEEDING- you will leave the office with a gauze pressure pack(s) in your mouth. Biting firmly on this pack with pressure directly over the extraction site is usually all that is required to control bleeding, however this pack may require several changes before bleeding slows. Remember, sufficient pressure and the pack **DIRECTLY** over the site is necessary to control bleeding. Other things to try if bleeding is still heavy after 4 pack changes (leave pack in place 15 to 20 minutes before changing): try holding ice water in your mouth, this helps to constrict blood vessels then try repacking. You can also try moistening a tea bag, wrapping it in gauze and biting on it for 20 minutes, this also can help constrict blood vessels. If still soaking the gauze, repeat each of these at least once. Spitting can increase bleeding, don't spit, let rinses "fall" in to sink. No sucking action (like a milkshake through a straw) this can also dislodge clots and stir up bleeding.

How do I know when I need to worry about bleeding? In people who have no know history of bleeding disorders and who are not on any type of blood "thinning" medication, bleeding that requires further treatment is quite uncommon. How does one determine if bleeding is excessive? First give several attempts at pack changes and try the additional steps given above, if after several changes, the pack is **COMPLETELY** soaked after five minutes (no white is seen around the gauze boarder), then that is significant and the doctor should be called. As long as you see white somewhere on the gauze after 5 minutes, nothing to worry about, some blood can be present on the gauze for many hours after an extraction. And some slight blood tinge in the saliva can be seen for 24-48 hours. **SUTURES-**Most sutures are self dissolving and will fall out by one week, no problem if they fall out sooner (even day one), the purpose of the sutures is to control bleeding only.

SWELLING- swelling is to be expected after some extractions, particularly with "surgical" extractions where a drill was used to remove bone or with the removal of impacted wisdom teeth. With a "basic" extraction you will probably have no swelling. Swelling may occur the day after the surgery or may develop slowly (particularly with wisdom teeth) over a 3 day period, in general you should not see new swelling after 3 days at which point it should begin to resolve. With wisdom tooth patients some swelling can linger up to two weeks after surgery but it should continue to improve after the third day..

Two things are helpful to minimize swelling, one, keep the head elevated, if you lay flat at night the next morning swelling will be worse than if you are propped up when sleeping, 25-30 degree incline is suggested. On the day of the extraction(s) an ice pack on the face over the site of the extractions, 20 minutes on 20 minutes off until bed time will help.

When to be concerned about swelling? Swelling should not increase after the 3rd post extraction day. Swelling should not be "rock hard" but should remain soft. Swelling in to the throat causing difficulty breathing should not occur and if it does, a trip to the emergency room is appropriate. Call the doctor if any of these things occur.

PAIN- pain after extraction is to be expected, it is often mild and can be controlled well with over the counter Tylenol or Motrin, if the extraction requires the removal of bone or if there are multiple extractions or if teeth are impacted, you may be prescribed a narcotic medication. **DON'T** drive or operate machinery if taking narcotics. Narcotics can cause nausea so try to eat something before taking narcotic (Vicodin or Percocet) medications. If you still have pain after taking a narcotic pain medication, a non steroidal anti inflammatory such as Motrin, Aleve, or Advil may also be taken, do not take Tylenol when taking the narcotic as most narcotic medications contain some Tylenol. Do not exceed recommended dosages. **DON'T SMOKE or RUB**, this increases chance of dry socket. (over)

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EATING- Do not eat any solids until the numbness from the local anesthetic wears off, you may have liquids immediately. Use common sense, pudding, yogurt, cottage cheese, soups etc. are a good start, cool rather than hot is the best in the beginning. If you had a single extraction, you might feel comfortable returning to a regular diet the next day, if extractions were difficult or there were multiple teeth involved, several days of a soft diet may be required, listen to your body, if it hurts to chew, adjust your diet accordingly, avoid salty, spicy or high acid food initially.

CLEANING- For the first week after extraction, use mild salt water rinses after every time you eat. (one quarter teaspoon of salt in tepid water). Brush and floss as you normally would, just avoid the extraction site. Generally you may return to using your regular mouthwash after the first week.

DIFFICULTY OPENING- this is called trismus and is commonly seen after removing impacted wisdom teeth but can be seen with any surgical extraction. It should slowly improve with time but may take 2 weeks or so to completely resolve.

SINUS COMMUNICATION- There is a sinus cavity located above the roots of the top molar teeth, in some people, entry in to this sinus is unavoidable, you will be given additional instructions if this occurs but most importantly no nose blowing for 1 to 2 weeks as this will tend to negatively impact the healing of the sinus. Antibiotics will be given and a decongestant may be used. Mild nose bleeds may occur if the sinus is entered, this is not of major concern and should be treated like any other nose bleed. Sometimes an additional procedure to close this opening is required.

NUMBNESS- with the exception of impacted lower wisdom teeth this is rarely seen, although it can occur with lower molars or bicuspid, it is usually temporary, let the doctor know at your post operative appointment if you are experiencing any numbness.

ANTIBIOTICS- If prescribed take until all gone unless you develop a rash, severe diarrhea, or other allergic reaction. Antibiotics can decrease birth control effectiveness.

IV SEDATION- If you had IV sedation do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours.

BONE CHIPS- It is quite common (about 10%) to develop a small protruding spicule of bone in the area of the extraction site. These are small pieces of the tooth socket that become detached or exposed after the extraction. Don't panic, these are not a big deal, they may fall out on their own but if they don't we trim them or remove them and there is no charge for that.

NAUSEA- although it occurs in less than 5%, IV sedation can cause nausea and vomiting, it is usually self limiting but if it continues an anti nausea medication can be given. Narcotic pain medication can also cause this it may need to be discontinued if nausea persists.

SMOKING- this delays healing and increases chances of pain and complications

Please call the office with any questions 724-225-3022. If you have an urgent need to speak with the doctor after office hours he may be reached at 724-344-7357 for emergency only.