

Lupus Street Dental Practice  
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## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINOR ORAL SURGERY AND EXTRACTIONS**

You need to look after yourself carefully after you have had a tooth taken out or any dental surgery. Following these instructions will help minimise post-operative pain, swelling, tenderness and aid healing, as well as prevent infection.

- Do not rinse your mouth out for at least 12 hours after an extraction. This will help the blood to clot in the socket. It is this blood clot that will aid healing.
- After 12 hours, dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water. Take a sip, hold it in your mouth and spit out. The salt will help cleanse the area and limit the chance of infection. **DO NOT RINSE OR GARGLE.** Over-enthusiastic rinsing can dislodge the clot and slow healing.
- It is important to keep your mouth clean. Brush your teeth as normal but brush the area of treatment gently, taking particular care not to cause any bruising or bleeding.
- Avoid eating or drinking until the local anaesthesia has worn off. This will stop you from accidentally chewing or burning your cheeks. Avoid food and drinks that are hot / cold / spicy / tough as the area will be sensitive.
- If you start to bleed again, do not worry. Roll a handkerchief into a sausage, place it over the bleeding socket and bite **HARD** for 30 minutes. The pressure should stop the bleeding. Should bleeding restart, repeat the procedure, this time moistening the handkerchief first. Remember that blood will mix with saliva so the volume will appear greater.
- You may experience some pain, swelling and bruising after treatment. This will only be short-lived and will improve after three days.
- Make sure you take some painkillers for the first 24 hours. These will help to reduce the pain and swelling. After this, take them as and when you feel you need them. Ibuprofen and paracetamol are good painkillers to use. Avoid taking aspirin as it may cause bleeding. If you are asthmatic, avoid taking ibuprofen as it may worsen your asthma.
- Take it easy for the rest of the day; avoid demanding physical work or exercise. Also refrain from drinking alcohol for the first 24 hours, as this can encourage bleeding and delay healing.
- Avoid smoking for at least 5 days after treatment. Smoking reduces the rate of healing and increase the risk of infection, which can be very painful. Ask your pharmacist for alternatives such as nicotine patches.
- If you feel small pieces of bone working their way out of the socket, don't worry – this is normal.
- Occasionally after the extraction of a tooth, the blood clot in the socket can break down, leaving a painful empty hole in the gum. The pain may sometimes be worse than the original toothache! This is called a 'dry socket'. If the socket becomes painful a day or two after the extraction, this is usually the reason. If it happens, you should go back to your dentist to have the wound cleaned and packed with a dressing; this will relieve the pain and reduce the risk of infection.
- If you have any concerns, prolonged bleeding or pain, call the surgery on 020 7834 8081.