

CARE AFTER MINOR ORAL SURGERY



Oral surgery is any procedure that involves cutting into or removing tissue from your mouth. It includes procedures like removing a tooth, gum surgery, and getting dental implants.

Make sure to rest. If you are up and about, you may feel more discomfort. Sometimes after minor oral surgery you may have pain, bleeding and swelling. Proper care after oral surgery will help your mouth heal quickly and cleanly.

IF YOU HAVE PAIN

✓ WHAT TO DO

Once the anesthetic (freezing) wears off, feeling some pain is normal, usually in the first 24 to 48 hours after your surgery. Some soreness or discomfort at the site of the surgery may last for 3 to 5 days.

Your dentist or oral surgeon may prescribe medication. Tell your dentist or oral surgeon about any other prescription medicines or herbal supplements you are taking. Take the medication exactly as your dentist or oral surgeon and pharmacist have instructed.

✗ WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not take more medication than advised.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain relief medication.
- Do not drive or use machines if you are taking narcotic medication. A narcotic may cause you to feel drowsy.

IF YOUR JAW IS SORE

✓ WHAT TO DO

After surgery, your jaw muscles may be sore and it may be hard to open your mouth for up to 7 to 10 days. Your jaw muscles may have become stiff and sore from holding your mouth open during surgery.

If your jaw muscles are not too sore, massage them gently with a warm, moist face cloth. Eat foods that are easy to chew such as eggs, pasta and bananas. Have drinks like smoothies, milk and juices.

✗ WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not force your mouth open.
- Do not chew gum or eat hard or chewy foods.

IF YOU HAVE BLEEDING

✓ WHAT TO DO

You will probably bleed for the first hour or 2 after surgery. The area may continue to ooze for up to 24 hours. Blood and saliva mix together in your mouth and it may look like you are bleeding more than you really are.

Your dentist or oral surgeon will use a gauze pad over the wound to cut down on the amount of bleeding while the blood clots. This gauze pad should be left in place for an hour no matter how soggy it becomes. Keep firm and constant pressure on the gauze pad by closing your teeth firmly on the pad. If you are still bleeding after 1 hour, put a new gauze pad on the area and continue to put firm and constant pressure on the pad for another hour.

Rest and keep your head raised. Rest slows down the circulation of blood. This helps stop the bleeding and helps faster healing. Brush and floss your teeth as usual, but stay away from the wound and use only a little bit of water.

A full day after surgery, rinse your mouth gently with warm water. Your dentist or oral surgeon may suggest that you add 1/2 teaspoon of salt to a cup of warm water each time you rinse. Rinse 4 or 5 times a day, for 3 or 4 days.

✗ WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not rinse your mouth within the first 24 hours, even if the bleeding and oozing leave a bad taste in your mouth.
- Do not chew on the gauze pad or suck on the wound.
- Do not strain yourself for 2 full days after your surgery.
- Avoid hot liquids like coffee and tea. If you eat soup, let it cool first. Hot liquids increase blood circulation and the wound could start to bleed again.
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco for the first 2 weeks after surgery. They delay healing and make it harder for the blood to clot and easier for an infection to start.

IF YOU HAVE SWELLING

✓ WHAT TO DO

Your face may swell in the first 24 hours after oral surgery. The swelling may last for 5 to 7 days. Once the swelling starts to go down, your face may bruise. The bruising could last for up to 10 days after your surgery.

On the first day after surgery, put a cold compress on the swollen area. You can make a cold compress by wrapping ice cubes in a towel or you can use a bag of frozen vegetables. Apply the cold compress for 10 minutes at a time for the first 24 hours after surgery, if possible.

On the second day after surgery, put something warm on the swollen area. You can make a warm compress by wrapping a hot water bottle or a heating pad in a towel. The warmth will increase blood flow or circulation and bring down the swelling. Do not use anything hot enough to burn your skin.

✗ WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not apply heat to the swollen area in the first 24 hours after surgery. This will only make the swelling worse.

TAKE PROMPT CARE OF ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS

CALL YOUR DENTIST OR ORAL SURGEON RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You are bleeding a lot and it has been 4 hours, or longer, since your surgery.
- You are nauseous.
- You are vomiting.
- You have a fever.
- You have ongoing pain, and it has been 1 full day or longer since your surgery.
- Your swelling is still getting worse, and it has been 2 days or longer since your surgery.
- If, after 7 to 10 days, your jaw muscles are still tender or your mouth is still hard to open.