

MOUTH CARE AFTER ENDODONTIC SURGERY

You have just undergone a minor surgical procedure and you can play an important part in aiding the healing process and maintaining comfort by following this advice.

For the rest of the day:

- **Take care:** do not bite the inside of your mouth as it may remain numb for 2-3 hours. There is often a temporary alteration of feeling in the area and the operated tooth may feel loose for a time.
- **Any discomfort:** is temporary as the local anaesthetic wears off. Take the normal dose of a mild painkiller (e.g., Ibuprofen, Paracetamol).
- **Eating:** Wait until the feeling has returned to your mouth. Eat well and you will feel well. Chew on the opposite side of your mouth and drink lots of fluids. Choose a soft nutritious diet (eggs, fish, high protein instant drinks, soups, yoghurts), avoiding hot food, spices and sharp tastes.
- **Swelling:** can be reduced by the use of a cold compress (an 'ice pack' wrapped in a tea towel). Apply with moderate pressure on the outside of your face, over the surgical area.
Do not keep the cold compress against your face for more than 10 minutes at a time.
- **Bleeding:** Slight oozing may occur, but should stop soon afterwards (within 30 minutes). Avoid vigorous exercise and alcohol. Avoid rinsing or sucking on the area. Do not pull at your lip or cheek to have a look.
- **If bleeding persists:** Keep calm and rinse gently with cold water. Roll up a clean wet handkerchief or gauze, press it firmly over the area and hold it there by your thumb and forefinger for at least 30 minutes.
- **Medication:** continue to take all tablets and medicines prescribed by your doctor or dentist.
- **Oral hygiene:** Do not brush the treated area. Continue to clean all your other teeth using your normal method. Use chlorhexidine rinse gently 1 hour after tooth brushing. **Do not smoke.**

The next few days:

- **Swelling and bruising:** should not cause concern and will get better within 7 days. Complete the whole course of antibiotics, if these were prescribed. Take the dose before meals.
- **Discomfort:** is normally a tolerable dull ache. Continue with a mild painkiller if necessary.
- **Stitches:** these should remain in place until the next appointment. You should not worry if a stitch falls out. However, do not attempt to remove the stitches yourself at home.
- **Chlorhexidine mouthwash:** used twice daily for a full minute, will reduce infection until you can start tooth brushing the treated area. Wait one hour after using fluoride toothpaste or salt-water mouth rinsing. Any staining of the teeth can be polished away later by your dentist.
- **Salt water mouth rinse:** use this 4 times a day to reduce pain and inflammation. Dissolve a level teaspoon of table salt in a cup of hot water. Take a mouthful, hold it over the wound and keep it there. When it is no longer hot, gently spit it out and repeat until finished.

If in doubt:

- In the first instance contact your dentist for appropriate advice if you are concerned that healing is not going well, (persistent bleeding, severe swelling or pain).
- When the practice is closed contact NHS Direct (0845 4647). This service operates 24 hours a day 365 days a year.