

### MOUTH CARE BEFORE and AFTER EXTRACTIONS

You can play an important part in helping the healing process by following this advice.

#### Before extractions:

- Keep your mouth clean by brushing and flossing regularly (as normally you should)
- Use of antiseptic mouthwash may help keep your mouth infection
- If you are a smoker, give up or cut down for as many days before and after. Smokers heal very poorly
- Continue with any prescribed medication if any

#### For the rest of the day –

- **Do not rinse your mouth out:** do not disturb or suck (avoid use of straw) on the socket for approx. 12 -24 hours.
- **Take care:** do not bite your tongue, lips or the inside of your cheeks as your mouth will remain numb for 2-3 hours.
- **Any discomfort:** is temporary as the local anaesthetic wears off. Take the normal dose of a mild painkiller (e.g., Ibuprofen, Paracetamol or Codeine). Please do not exceed recommended dosages.
- **Medication:** Continue to take all tablets and medicines prescribed by your doctor or dentist. If antibiotics have been prescribed, take the dose before meals. If you are taking blood thinners (e.g., Direct Oral Anticoagulants-DOAC, you may have been asked to skip a dose. For Warfarin pre-extraction INR levels should be between 2.5 and 4.
- **Eating:** Waiting until the feeling has returned to your mouth. Choose a soft nutritious diet (eggs, fish, high protein instant drinks, soups, yoghurt), avoiding hot food, spices (especially chillies) and sharp tastes. Chew on the opposite side of your mouth.
- **Bleeding:** Slight oozing may occur, but should stop soon afterwards (within 30 minutes). Avoid vigorous exercise and alcohol and aspirin. **Do not smoke.**
- **If bleeding persists: Keep calm.** Roll up a clean wet handkerchief/teabag or gauze, press it firmly over the socket and hold it there by closing your jaws together for at least 30 minutes.
- **Oral hygiene:** Continue to clean all the other teeth using your normal method.

#### The next few days: -

- **Start to bathe your mouth with salt water 4 times a day:** to reduce pain and inflammation. Dissolve a level teaspoon of table salt in a cup of hot water without scalding yourself. Take a mouthful, hold it over the area and keep it there (you may need to turn your head to the side or lean forward). When it is no longer hot, gently spit it out and repeat until finished.
- **Daily routine:** Arrange a light schedule. Continue to take the antibiotics (if prescribed) until the whole course has been completed.
- **Any discomfort:** Some pain and swelling are normal after extractions, but will soon get better. Continue with a mild painkiller if necessary.

#### If in doubt:

- In the first instance contact your own dentist for appropriate advice if you are concerned that healing is not going well, (persistent bleeding, swollen glands, severe swelling, pain, restricted mouth opening or fever).
- When the practice is closed contact NHS Direct (111). This service operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

#### Common complications:

Bruising: Particularly people with pale skin tone and fragile skin. This will resolve in few days.

Mouth opening may be restricted for a week

Blood staining saliva is to be expected for 24-72 hrs post extraction.

Swelling: Usually reaches maximum over 3 days. Usually resolves after a week.

Dry socket (see below) in areas with thicker bone as in the lower jaw.

Persistent numbness of the tongue or lip can happen following local anaesthetic or surgery. This is usually temporary and resolves without treatment within days. If persistent, please contact the practice.

#### Wisdom teeth extractions and other minor oral surgery:

- As a general rule, the upper jaw heals quicker than lower jaw. Healing is particularly poor in the lower wisdom tooth area especially in smokers.
- Numbness of the lip/tongue may linger for a little longer where the tooth was positioned close to the nerve. In vast majority of the case this recovers within a few days but can persist longer. Please contact us for advice and reassurance if the numbness lasts longer than a few days.
- In some cases (smokers; difficult extractions; thick bone; areas of poor blood supply) adequate blood clot does not form. This hinders healing- a condition called "**Dry Socket**" characterised by foul metallic taste. Unfortunately, this is a very slow healing (can take 7-21 days) painful condition where antibiotics are useless. Good hygiene, with saltwater mouth bathing (not vigorous rinsing), Paracetamol or Ibuprofen may alleviate pain. Please, do not exceed recommended dosage. Sometimes dentist may clean the socket and put medicaments to carry antibiotics locally in the socket. Sorry but there is no miraculous cure for this!

**PS: Patients on Aspirin, DOACs or Warfarin who have persistent bleeding or recurrent a few hours following a surgery procedure must go to A & E immediately if you cannot contact your dentist.**