

Oral Surgery Post-Op Instructions

What to Expect:

Pain – You will have pain for 1-3 weeks after surgery. The pain should generally get better with time but there may be episodes of increased pain from time to time. You may have pain in your jaws, other teeth, ear, neck, and/or temple. If the pain gets worse rather than better over time notify us!

Bleeding – Your gums will ooze blood for a few hours then you will have spotty bleeding off and on for up to 7 days after surgery. If you had skin incisions they may bleed as well. The mouth is wet so it takes longer for your body to make a good scab. You may have nosebleeds if you went to the operating room and/or you had sinus surgery. The bleeding should get better day by day. If not, please call us!

Swelling – You will have swelling anywhere you had surgery. You may have large amount of face swelling if you had a large or difficult surgery or you may have only slight gum swelling if you had a simple tooth extraction. The swelling will get **WORSE** for 2-3 days before it gets better.

Bruising – You may have bruising on your face or neck from the surgery. If you take aspirin or other blood thinners you are more likely to have bruising. The bruises will start out as purple or red and change to green or yellow over time. Bruises on your face may move to your neck and even chest over time. They will all go away.

Difficulty Opening Mouth – Pain, swelling, and bruising will all make it difficult to open your mouth. If your mouth opening is not back to normal after 3 weeks please let us know. Also, if your mouth opening gets worse after the first week instead of better let us know.

Nausea and Vomiting – IV anesthesia and general anesthesia can both make you nauseated for about 24 hours after surgery. If you vomit more than once please notify us but keep trying to drink fluids.

What to Do:

- Bite against folded gauze pads to stop bleeding. Put the gauze directly over the bleeding area and bite down for at least 20 minutes without moving the gauze or talking. If the incisions are not in a place you can bite against use your fingers to apply pressure with the gauze. If this fails to work try biting on a tea bag (regular black tea) the same way. If bleeding is persistent please call us.
- Keep your head elevated until the swelling gets better. Use extra pillows when you sleep.
- Apply ice to your cheeks and/or neck for 24-36 hours after surgery then either do nothing or switch to a heating pad. You can continue to use ice if it makes you feel better but the ice may prolong swelling after 24-36 hours. **IF YOU HAD AN INFECTION SKIP THE ICE AND USE HEAT.**
- Eat and drink! Do not let yourself become malnourished or dehydrated. Unless otherwise instructed, you may eat and drink whatever is comfortable from water to steak. If you had IV sedation or went to the OR, start with clear liquids then advance to other things.
- Take showers and bathe as normal. Clean skin wounds with soap and water.
- **BRUSH YOUR TEETH** and tongue! If you do not have any teeth, brush your tongue! Keep your mouth clean to allow healing. Go slow, be gentle, and use a **soft toothbrush** around stitches.

What NOT to Do:

- **DO NOT** use a straw to drink thick drinks (milkshakes, smoothie, etc.) for one week.
- **DO NOT** drink carbonated (bubbly) drinks for at least 24 hours after surgery (they can make you bleed)
- **DO NOT** eat sharp foods like chips and pretzels until you are healed.
- **DO NOT** chew directly on surgery sites for at least 2 weeks.
- **DO NOT SMOKE.**
- **DO NOT** drink alcohol for 2 weeks.
- **DO NOT** drive for 24 hours after IV sedation or general anesthesia.
- **DO NOT** participate in strenuous activities like sports, hiking, and yard or housework the day of surgery. Most patient may gradually resume normal activity the following day unless instructed otherwise.
- **DO NOT** put ice on an infection. Ice decreased blood flow and antibiotic delivery to the area.

Notify Us For:

- Severe pain
- Trouble breathing or swallowing
- Severe nausea or repeated vomiting
- Unusual bleeding
- Increased swelling after 3 days

We will generally need to see you in person in the clinic or emergency room if you are having significant problems.

Contact Information:

River City Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Mark Haverkorn, DDS, MD

210-778-0002

Messages are checked after hours. If you leave a message and do not receive a response within 1 hour please call again.

Clinic Hours:

Monday - Thursday 8:30am – 5:00pm and Fridays 7:30am – 2:00pm.

Emergencies:

In the event of a true emergency – the patient passes out, massive bleeding, difficulty breathing or swallowing, etc –go to the nearest ER immediately and notify us when you can. If necessary, call 911. **When in doubt it is NEVER wrong to call 911 or go to an emergency room.**

Women, please be aware that antibiotic use can interfere with birth control pills and NuvaRing. If you receive antibiotics, you should not trust your birth control pills or NuvaRing for one month. Use alternative birth control for one month. Talk to your Ob/Gyn doctor for more information.