

# Dental Post-Operative Advice Sheet

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## Pain

Following surgery in the mouth it is normal to experience some degree of pain and discomfort. For the first couple hours after a procedure local anesthetic may still be effective in preventing that discomfort. As the numbness wears off simple pain killers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen should be sufficient to control the pain. Take these as required. Do not exceed the manufacturer's recommended dose. If in doubt, check with your doctor or surgeon first.

## Swelling

Some swelling and bruising may develop in and around the operated area or slightly further from it depending on the complexity and duration of the procedure. It may vary from person to person. Usually the swelling starts gradually reducing after the third day. During the first 24 hours you may apply cold packs on the operated area to reduce the amount of swelling and discomfort. DO NOT apply hot packs to the face and avoid very warm environments to prevent the swelling getting larger.

## Bleeding

On the day of surgery there is often a small amount of blood oozing from the operation site. You should not be worried if you taste blood in your mouth as the fresh blood clot may cause that. If you do notice continuous bleeding, do not rinse out, but apply pressure to the area with a damp rolled-up cotton material either with your finger or by biting on it firmly for 20 minutes. Make sure this is placed directly over the bleeding spot. Repeat this as necessary. If the bleeding hasn't stopped after an hour, contact your surgeon.

## Stitches

Some operations will require stitches. These are normally self-dissolving and will break down and fall off as the wound heals. Avoid pushing the stitches with your tongue, as this may cause the wound edges to separate. If your stitches require removal, we will arrange this at a follow up appointment.

## Food

Try not to eat and drink until the anesthetic wears off as you cannot feel the temperature and you may burn your mouth or bite your lip or cheek. Avoid hot food and drinks for 24 hours after the operation as this may cause bleeding and may delay healing. Eat soft food and avoid chewing on the operated side of your mouth if possible. Avoid alcohol as it may result in bleeding.

## Mouthcare

Keep your mouth as clean as possible to reduce the risk of infection. Clean your teeth as normal brushing gently but thoroughly near the area of the operation. Do not be tempted to rinse the area for the first 24 hours. You can gently rinse your mouth using salt water or dental mouthwash, after food, from the second day. Mouthwashes containing chlorhexidine have good antibacterial effect. Do not rinse too vigorously to prevent the blood clot from being washed away. Do not let your tongue disturb the healing.

## Smoking

We recommend that you avoid smoking for as long as you can after the procedure, but this should be at least for the rest of the day. If you smoke this may increase your chances of painful and infected healing.

## For more information

As with any surgical procedure there is a small risk of problems occurring with healing. However, by following these instructions you should minimise that risk.

If you experience any problems (difficult to manage pain or swelling, bleeding, bad taste in your mouth) contact the Department of Oral Surgery on 01493 452347 Monday to Friday between 8.30am & 4.30pm.

If you require help out of hours, after 4.30 pm or at weekends, please contact 01603 286286 and ask for the doctor on call for Oral Surgery.

### Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

### Trust Values

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Courtesy and respect</li><li>• A welcoming and positive attitude</li><li>• Polite, friendly and interested in people</li><li>• Value and respect people as individuals<br/>So people feel <b>welcome</b></li><li>• Attentively kind and helpful</li><li>• Look out for dignity, privacy &amp; humanity</li><li>• Attentive, responsive &amp; take time to help</li><li>• Visible presence of staff to provide care<br/>So people feel <b>cared for</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsive communication</li><li>• Listen to people &amp; answer their questions</li><li>• Keep people clearly informed</li><li>• Involve people<br/>So people feel <b>in control</b></li><li>• Effective and professional</li><li>• Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring</li><li>• Effective care / services from joined up teams</li><li>• Organised and timely, looking to improve<br/>So people feel <b>safe</b></li></ul> |
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The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

**For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240**