



Patient Information Leaflet Instructions for after surgery procedures

Cork University Dental
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to help you to be as comfortable as possible after your surgery and it contains answers to frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or you would like further information, please ask us.

How will my mouth feel after the surgery?

- Your mouth will be **numb** for 3 - 4 hours following your surgery.
- Some slight **bleeding** is normal for a day or so.
- Some **pain** is normal - your dentist will advise you how to manage this.
- Some **swelling** and **bruising** is normal for a few days.
- Some difficulty opening your mouth wide is common for a few days.

What do I need to do - and what do I need to avoid?

- Do not disturb the area of the surgery and don't rinse your mouth for the first 24 hours.
- Don't have anything hot to eat or drink while you are numb - you may burn yourself.
- Be careful not to accidentally bite your lip, tongue or cheek - it is easy to do damage when you can't feel the area properly.
- Avoid hot or fizzy drinks for a day - they can dislodge the blood clot that is forming over the wound and delay healing.
- You can eat afterwards – most people find it easier to stick to soft foods at first.
- It is important to drink plenty of water.
- After 24 hours you can start to rinse gently with warm salty water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) or with a mouthwash if your dentist has recommended one.
- Brush your teeth but avoid the area of the surgery until it is comfortable.
- **Keep your mouth as clean as possible – this will help healing.**

When will I be back to normal?

In most cases the gum will heal in 7 - 10 days. The bone underneath will take longer to heal – often three months or more – but you will not usually feel this happening. Swelling will be at its worst on the second or third day. Most swelling should have disappeared within a week or two. With swelling, you may also have some difficulty opening your mouth wide, but this also generally returns to normal within a week or two. Any stitches you have will usually fall out by themselves in 10 - 14 days. If they need to be removed your dentist will give you another appointment. You may need to take **time off** – your dentist will advise you about this.

For detailed advice on what to do for bleeding, pain and swelling please see the instructions on the other side of this page

Follow the instructions below in order to stay as comfortable as possible.

To Control Bleeding

A little bleeding is common in the first 24 hours. This is usually easily controlled by biting down on gauze pads which you will be given to take home. If there is bleeding, you should dampen the gauze, roll it up and bite down on it for **15 minutes** before you re-check the area. This may need to be repeated.

To Control Pain

Taking a painkiller regularly in order to keep pain at bay is much more effective than waiting until the pain is severe. If you have not been given a prescription then take regular paracetamol according to the instructions on the packet. If your pain is more severe then you can combine the paracetamol with ibuprofen (if you are able to take it). Never take more than the recommended dose of any painkiller.

You should take the first dose of your painkiller before the numbness wears off.

To Minimise Swelling

Regular anti-inflammatory painkillers (for example, ibuprofen) will help to keep the swelling down. An ice-pack can be used in the first 24 hours. Make sure it is wrapped up (for example in a small towel) and apply it to your face for 15 minutes at a time every few hours.

Dry Socket

Sometimes a socket (where the tooth was) becomes more painful 2 - 3 days after an extraction. This is usually because you have a dry socket. Dry sockets are more common in people who **smoke** and in women who take the oral **contraceptive pill**. If you get a dry socket you need to **see a dentist** who will put a dressing in the socket to reduce the pain.

NO SMOKING

Smoking interferes with healing. The action of inhaling may also make bleeding start again.

You should avoid smoking for several days.

If you have any problems or worries after your appointment you should contact us immediately at 021 – 4545100 for advice and help.

After 5pm there is an on-call dentist at the Emergency Department of Cork University Hospital, (021) 4546400

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This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients>