

Dental or oral surgery

What to expect after surgery

If you have had a tooth removed, there will be a hole where your tooth was removed. This is called the tooth socket. It will fill in slowly with new tissue. You may feel bony edges around the tooth socket. These can be mistaken for part of the tooth, but they are not the roots. These edges become covered with tissue and smooth down as you heal.

If you have stitches, they will dissolve and fall out in about 3 to 10 days.

Bruising is common after surgery. Your skin may look black, blue, yellow or green. Bruising takes at least 1 week to go away. You may also have some swelling in the area of your surgery.

Some pain or discomfort after oral surgery is normal. The amount of pain you feel depends on the type of surgery you had. Your throat may also feel sore and you may have trouble opening your mouth.

Nausea, bruising, limitations of jaw opening will frequently occur and will gradually disappear.

How to stop bleeding

If you notice bleeding, bite down on a cold moistened gauze in your mouth for 45 minutes. If you still have bleeding, fold a clean cold moistened gauze, put it over the socket and bite on this for 20 minutes. Keep your head elevated and repeat as needed.

Keep your gauze in the freezer. A cold moistened tea bag can be used if you run out of gauze.

How to reduce swelling

When you return home and for the day after surgery: prepare an ice bag or cold compress and wrap in a soft dry towel. Apply to the swollen area – 15 minutes on, 60 minutes off while awake. Then as needed.

Swelling often increases on the 3rd and 4th day, and then gradually gets less.

Pain

Using ice bags or cold compresses and taking pain medication can help control your pain. You may be given a prescription for pain medication. Take this medication as told to you by your surgeon.

If your pain gets worse or does not feel better after the 5th day, call your surgeon. It is normal for pain to increase on the 3rd or 4th day.

Helping your mouth heal

Do not rinse your mouth or brush your teeth for 24 hours. Then, start rinsing with warm salt water. Add ½ teaspoon of salt to 8oz (250 ml) of warm water. Rinse after each meal and before bed. Continue to rinse for 4 weeks.

Keep fingers, toothpicks, water picks, straws and rubber tips out of your mouth. If you had a tooth removed, do not touch the tooth socket. There may be a blood clot in the socket. The clot may look grey or yellow. A slight odour is normal and does not mean you have an infection. If you disturb the clot, your socket may not heal.

You may be given a syringe to flush the socket with the warm salt water. Flush twice a day starting 1 week after your surgery. Continue to flush until the socket is healed and the hole is gone.

Smoking can delay healing. Do not smoke for 5 to 7 days after surgery.

What to eat and drink

For the first 24 hours, drink plenty of clear warm fluids and eat soft food. Progress to a normal diet as desired.

Do not use a straw when you drink. This can disturb the clot in the tooth socket.

Do not drink alcohol for 2 days.

If you have new dentures

Leave your dentures in overnight. After the first night, take out your dentures and leave them out while sleeping.

Call your surgeon

- If you have any questions or concerns.
- Your pain does not lessen after 5 days.

