

After Your Oral Surgery *For patients at the School of Dentistry*

This handout explains what to expect after your oral surgery at UWMC's School of Dentistry.

Thank you for coming to the School of Dentistry for your oral surgery. Your treatment will continue until your healing is complete. If you have any questions or concerns, call your student dentist or surgeon,

_____ , at _____.

They will arrange for emergency treatment, if needed.

If you cannot reach your student dentist or surgeon, call 206-744-3000 and ask for the Oral Surgery Resident on call to be paged. If you need to be seen in the Emergency Room, you will be billed separately for that service.

Your Follow-up Visit

Oral surgery patients are usually seen about 1 week after surgery to check on their healing and remove any loose sutures (stitches).

Please call 206-543-5860 to schedule your follow-up visit.



At your follow-up visit, we will check on your healing and remove any loose sutures.

What to Expect After Your Oral Surgery

Swelling

Some swelling is normal after oral surgery. For most people, it increases for 2 or 3 days and then starts to go down after that. If your swelling and pain increase after 3 days, call the clinic for an appointment.

Discomfort

You will have the most discomfort when feeling starts to return to your mouth.

Bleeding

You can expect to have bleeding or “oozing” for the first 12 to 24 hours after surgery.

Self-care to Speed Your Recovery After Extractions

Bleeding

Bite on the sponges that were placed in your mouth at the end of surgery for at least 1 hour, and up to 2 or 3 hours.

If you have a lot of bleeding:

- Use gauze to remove all excess blood clots from your mouth.
- Place a clean, damp gauze pad over the bleeding area only.
- Press on the gauze firmly for 20 minutes, so that no blood escapes.
- Repeat if needed.
- Call the clinic or Oral Surgery Resident on call if the bleeding does not stop.



Use an ice or cold pack to reduce swelling after your oral surgery.

Swelling and Bruising

- To reduce swelling, sit with your head up. Move around as little as you can for 8 to 12 hours after your surgery.
- To help lessen swelling, start using an ice or cold pack right after your surgery:
 - Apply the pack to the side of your face, over the surgery site.
 - Hold the pack on your face for 15 minutes, then remove it for 15 minutes. Repeat.
 - If both sides of your mouth were operated on, apply the pack first to one side of your face, and then to the other side, for 15 minutes at a time.
 - Do this as often as you can for the rest of the day after your surgery. After that, the ice or cold pack will not be helpful in reducing swelling.
- You may also have some bruises on your face. This is a normal part of the healing process.

Activity

- We suggest you relax and limit your activity for the rest of the day after your surgery.
- You can resume light activities the day after your surgery, if you feel up to it.



For 2 days after your surgery, you may have only liquids and soft foods, such as smooth soups.

Diet

- **For 2 days after surgery:** Drink liquids and eat soft foods only. This may include milkshakes, eggnog, yogurt, cooked cereals, cottage cheese, smooth soups, mashed potatoes, refried beans, ice cream, pudding, fruit smoothies, and protein shakes.
- **On day 3 after surgery:** You may start eating soft foods that do not need much chewing, such as macaroni and cheese, cooked noodles, soft-boiled eggs, scrambled eggs, poached eggs, and soft sandwiches. Avoid tough or crunchy foods such as pizza, rice, popcorn, and hamburger. Also avoid spicy and acidic foods.
- Most patients can resume their normal diet 7 days after surgery.

Medicines

- Medicines to control pain and prevent infection will be prescribed for you. It is very important that you take all medicines as directed.
- Start taking the pain medicine before the local anesthetic you received before surgery wears off. Continue to take it as prescribed.
- Follow the pain medicine instructions your doctor gave you. If we believe you will have more severe pain, we will prescribe a stronger pain medicine that you will need to buy at a pharmacy.

Mouth Rinse and Teeth Care

- Do not rinse your mouth for 24 hours after your surgery.
- After 24 hours, rinse your mouth with warm salt water after meals. Stir $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt into 8 ounces of warm water. Rinsing with salt water will help speed healing. Your doctor may prescribe Peridex for rinsing.
- You may brush your teeth if you are careful to avoid your wounds.

Removable Dental Devices After Implant Surgery

- If you usually wear a removable dental device that replaces missing teeth and rests on the surgery area, check with your surgeon or regular dentist before starting to wear it again after surgery. It is important not to put any pressure on the surgery site.
- If your bite feels different when you start wearing the device again, or if you had a dental implant and it feels like the device is hitting the implant, call your doctor.

Impacted Teeth

Removing impacted teeth is very different from extracting erupted teeth. If you had an impacted tooth removed, you will likely have these symptoms for a short time:

- Difficulty opening your mouth
- Pain while swallowing
- Earache on the side of your surgery

If the impacted tooth was in your lower jaw, you may have numbness in your lower lip or tongue on the side where the tooth was removed. This numbness should go away, but it may last from a few days to many months.

You may also have sores on your lips after surgery. Use petroleum jelly (Vaseline) on your lips until they heal.

What NOT to Do

For All Dental Surgery Patients

- Do not apply heat to your face, unless your surgeon told you to do so. Heat can increase swelling.
- Do not use straws, suck on anything, or smoke. These actions cause *negative pressure* in your mouth, which can dislodge the blood clot that is keeping your wound closed, cause more bleeding, and delay your healing.

If You Were Told to Follow Sinus Precautions

- Do not blow your nose. Wipe instead.
- If you need to sneeze, do so with your mouth open.
- Do **not** use straws.
- No smoking.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery/
School of Dentistry:

Call 206-543-5860 from
8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.
Monday through Thursday,
and from 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
on Friday.

After hours and on
weekends and holidays, call
206-744-3000 and ask for
the Oral Surgery Resident
on call to be paged.