

Contact us

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Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 01737 231 958

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Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH



You can also ask a member of staff to contact
PALS on your behalf.

Minor Oral Surgery: Post-Op Instructions

East Surrey Hospital



Document information

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Minor Oral Surgery: Post-op Instructions
Patient information number 00043

What to expect and do in the first 24 hours?

- Do not explore the tooth extraction site with your tongue or fingers
- Swelling and bruising may occur both inside and outside of the mouth
- You will be numb for a few hours after surgery so be careful not to burn yourself with hot food or drink and avoid biting your lip/cheek
- You may wish to take pain relief medication while you're still numb so that the pain relief is effective once the numbness wears off
- Avoid hot drinks which may burn your mouth or hard foods for the next 24 hours
- It is best to have soft food for example cooled pasta or soup for at least 2 days
- Avoid spitting or rinsing for 24 hours after the tooth extraction – this may wash away the blood clot and cause more bleeding and pain (dry socket)
- Avoid cleaning teeth on the day of the extraction but begin again the following day with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste as usual and take care around the extraction site

What to expect and do in the first 72 hours?

- AVOID alcohol, smoking and strenuous exercise
- You may experience difficulty opening your mouth and pain/stiffness of your jaw. This will ease after 72 hours but can last longer
- You may experience bad breath; this is unlikely to last more than a week
- You will have a small hole or depression in the gum where the tooth was extracted and this can take up to 2 months to close over
- After 24 hours, gently rinse your mouth with warm salt-water (1 teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water)
- Pain is common for the first 48-72 hours and the mouth can be sore for up to a couple of weeks

What to do if you bleed?

- It is normal to experience a little oozing from the socket and saliva may appear pink/red
- If bleeding restarts later on, use one of the bite-packs dampened with tap water and bite down/apply pressure on the socket where the tooth was removed for 15 minutes whilst seated, repeat as needed
- If you do not have a bite-pack, use a clean towel to bite down on or apply pressure
- If bleeding does not stop, please contact the Dental Department on 01737231650 between (Monday - Friday 9am – 4.30pm) or 111 (NHS Out of Ours Helpline) or Accident & Emergency

How to control pain?

- You will be advised about the pain relief that is most appropriate for you with regards to your medical history, so we ask that you verify your medical history details with us at every appointment.
- Please follow the instructions on the packet, do not exceed the maximum dose of any pain relief medication and contact your Dentist, GP or Pharmacist if you need clarification or suitable alternatives

What is a dry socket?

- Dry socket is delayed healing of a socket (where the tooth was removed) due to the early breakdown of the blood clot which can cause a dull pain. This pain is not resolved with painkillers and normally occurs a few days after the extraction
- This can be treated with a dressing placed at your dentist or by contacting us

Other instructions

- If you have stitches, these will dissolve by themselves in approximately 7-14 days
- If you were given antibiotics, follow the instructions and complete the course. If you get a reaction to the antibiotics e.g. rash, stop taking the antibiotics and contact the hospital, GP or local Accident & Emergency for further advice