

# Advice after dental extractions and surgical procedures



## Instructions to patients after surgery of the mouth/face/jaws.

1. After leaving the clinic, do not rinse out your mouth for 24 hours, unless you have been advised to do so.
2. Please do not smoke.
3. Do not disturb the surgical wound with your fingers or tongue.
4. For the rest of the day, only have food that requires no chewing.
5. Do not chew on the affected side for at least three days.
6. While your mouth is still feeling numb, be careful not to bite your lip, cheek or tongue.
7. Avoid exercise or heavy lifting.
8. Do not have any alcoholic drinks or very hot drinks.

## Bleeding

Blood stained (pink) saliva is normal and to be expected for 24-48 hours after the operation. If persistent (red, fresh) bleeding occurs, roll up a piece of gauze, dampen under cold water and place it over the wound and bite firmly over a period of at least 15 to 20 minutes. Do not take the gauze in and out of the mouth to check. Repeat if necessary. If the bleeding still does not stop, seek

dental or medical advice using the telephone numbers at the end of this leaflet.

In the event of sudden onset of severe bleeding or severe bleeding that cannot be controlled, call 999 and request ambulance services and continue to apply firm pressure to the bleeding site

## Care of your mouth the day after surgery.

Your mouth will heal more quickly if you keep it clean and use warm salt mouth baths.

After 24 hours, dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a tumbler of warm water (about the same temperature as a cup of tea). Take a mouthful and tilt your head so that the warm salt water bathes the affected area.

After about 30 seconds, gently swill and spit out and repeat the bathing until you have used the whole tumbler. If possible, the warm salt mouth baths should be used three times daily for seven days, after meals.

## Toothbrushing

You can brush your teeth as usual but avoid direct contact with the surgical site.

## Pain & swelling

You may have been given an injection into the gum to make the area numb. This generally lasts 3-4 hours, before sensation slowly returns and care should be taken to avoid biting the lip, cheek or tongue during this time. Pain and swelling should gradually improve over 7-10 days. Simple over the counter painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen should be used to control the pain.

## Stitches

Stitches may have been used to close the gum. These are usually dissolvable (unless told otherwise) and will take 2-3 weeks to dissolve. Do not disturb the stitches with your tongue or fingers as the wound heals.

## Dry socket pain

This painful condition usually begins 24 to 48 hours after the removal of a tooth. It is caused by the loss of the blood clot from your extraction site and exposure of the jawbone. The chance of getting a dry socket is increased if you smoke. Please try to refrain from smoking.

This condition is not treatable with antibiotics, but you will need to be seen by a dentist. If you do have this condition, the extraction site will be washed out and a special pain-killing dressing applied.

If you feel that you may be suffering with dry socket or another post-operative problem, for example:

- Uncontrolled pain that is not resolving with painkillers
- Swelling that is spreading
- Bleeding that cannot be controlled

Please contact us early in the day to arrange an urgent appointment.

Bristol Dental School (8:30 am – 4:30 pm)  
Tel: 0117 374 6647

Emergency out of hours NHS: 111

**Help us prevent the spread of infection. Please make sure your hands are clean. Wash and dry them thoroughly/ use the gel provided. If you have been unwell in the last 48 hours please consider whether your visit is essential.**

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death.

For support in stopping smoking contact NHS Smokefree on: **0300 123 1044**.

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence.

Contact Drinkline on: **0300 123 1110**.

Please ask at reception  
if you require this  
information in a different  
language or format

**Contact us:**

Monday to Friday,  
8:30 am - 4:30pm  
T: 0117 374 6647

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