



# **Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE)**

## **Extraction of Wisdom Teeth Post-operative instructions**

**Version 2.0**

Date approved: November 2018

Approved by: The Board

Review due: November 2020

Policy will be updated as required in response to a change in national policy or evidence-based guideline.

## **Post-operative instructions following removal of wisdom teeth**

Recovery after wisdom tooth surgery is generally quite straightforward, but you are likely to experience pain and swelling, particularly in the first 2 days. It is important to take it easy for a day or two after the operation.

### **General Precautions**

- You will be numb in the area of the extraction for the next 3-4 hours. Be careful not to burn yourself with hot food or drink during this time and avoid any lip /cheek biting.
- Do not disturb the extraction wound and avoid exploring it with your tongue or fingers.

### **Bleeding**

- It is normal to experience slight ooze of blood following a tooth extraction and this can make your saliva appear pink or red.
- Avoid excessive spitting or vigorous rinsing in the first 24 hours after the extraction.
- Please rest as much as possible over the next 2-3 hours whilst the clot forms in the socket.
- If bleeding restarts, soak one of the bite packs provided with clean water and squeeze out excess water before biting on it for 20 minutes. If these are not available, roll up a clean handkerchief, place it over the socket and bite down for at least 20 minutes. If the bleeding continues, you should contact your dentist or emergency services (details given on the last page).

### **Pain control**

- You are likely to experience pain for the first 48 hours, although your mouth may well be sore for up to a week or so after the operation. Local anaesthetic injections given during the procedure ensure that you have no pain for the first 3-4 hours after surgery, but once the anaesthetic wears off, you need to take the painkillers given to you. You should take these regularly to ensure that you sleep well on the first night; this will maximise your recovery.
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen are effective for pain control especially when these two drugs are taken together. Please follow the directions given to you by your surgeon or the pharmacist. If you are unable to take these medications due to medical problems, your surgeon can suggest suitable alternatives.

### **Diet**

- Avoid chewing on the affected side for the next 24 hours.
- Avoid hot liquids and hard foods for the next 24 hours. After each meal, please ensure there is no debris left in the extraction socket.

## **Oral hygiene**

- You should be able to clean the adjacent teeth the day after the extraction with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste as usual, but take care around the site of extraction and avoid excessive spitting or vigorous rinsing in the first 24 hours after the extraction.
- After 24 hours, gently rinse your mouth with warm salt water mouth wash (1 teaspoon salt in a cup of warm water) every 4-6 hours for the next 3-5 days”.

## **Avoid** (for 48-72 hours)

- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Exercise

## **Swelling**

- Swelling, particularly in the cheek area, both inside and outside the mouth, is common. Again, it is worst for the first 2 days, after which it will gradually subside; it can be relieved by using ice packs, starting shortly after surgery. Bruising to the skin of the face may also occur.

## **Jaw stiffness**

- You may have difficulty opening your mouth and experience pain or stiffness of the jaw joint. This will normally disappear after a couple of days, but can occasionally last for up to 2 weeks. You may need to eat a soft diet for a week or so. Be careful not to force your jaw open before it is ready and do allow time for the swelling to go down. Ibuprofen will help to relieve this pain.

## **Sensitivity of Teeth**

- Sensitivity of the teeth next to the wisdom-tooth socket is common; it is resolved with good oral hygiene, although it may last for several weeks.

## **Bad breath**

- You may experience bad breath; this is unlikely to last more than a week.

## **Stitches**

- Stitches will dissolve by themselves and so do not need removing, but it is important to brush and rinse regularly to minimise food trapping.

## **Healing**

- When the tooth is removed the roots leave a ‘socket’ in the bone. This hole in the gum may last for up to 3 months.

Follow-up appointments are not usually booked after wisdom tooth surgery; however, if you have complications, or are experiencing problems please use the following contact details:

**Emergency contacts**

Monday to Friday 0900 – 1600 hours

Peninsula Dental School, Dental Education Facility

**Tel: 0345 155 8109**

Out of hours / weekends

Devon Doctors

**Tel: 01392 823 682**

or

Local Accident & Emergency Department