



Patient & Family Guide
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After Dental Extractions or Wisdom Teeth Removal

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l'extraction des dents ou l'extraction
des dents de sagesse* (FF85-1786)



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After Dental Extractions or Wisdom Teeth Removal

Pain and discomfort

- After the local anesthetic or freezing wears off, you may feel some pain and discomfort in your jaws. This is normal and may last a few days. The amount of pain is different for each person.
- If you had pain medication prescribed for you, take it as directed. Remember that the pain medication may not completely relieve the pain. Also remember, the pain may continue to get worse after surgery before it starts to get better.

**What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

Bleeding

- After the teeth have been extracted (taken out), the tooth sockets (“holes”) will fill up with blood and form a clot or scab just like a cut on your skin. Do your best to not disturb or dislodge the clots at the extraction sites. Keep your tongue, your toothbrush, and rough foods away from the clots. **Don’t use straws because the sucking action can suck the clots out of the sockets and cause bleeding.**
- The sockets may ooze a bit of blood for the first few hours after surgery. If you drool blood, it is probably mostly saliva mixed with a bit of blood. If you think the extraction sites are bleeding too much, follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Wet 2 or 3, 2 x 2 inch gauze pads. Roll each pad up into a ball.
3. Place the pads over the bleeding socket(s).
4. Bite firmly on the pads for 20 to 30 minutes, putting firm pressure on the socket(s).

Repeat these steps 2 to 3 times, if needed.

- If you don’t have gauze, you can also use the corner of a face cloth or wet tea bags. This will usually stop any bleeding. If this doesn’t stop the bleeding, call the Clinic at 902-473-2070. Don’t worry if you see a few spots of blood on your pillow the next morning.

Swelling

- Swelling at the corners of your jaws and cheeks is normal. It will generally get worse for 2 or 3 days after surgery before starting to get better.
- Swelling can be helped by placing ice at the corners of your jaws for the first 24 hours. A bag of ice or frozen peas wrapped in a cloth or towel can be placed on your face and jaws and held there for 20 minutes. Generally 20 minutes on and then 20 minutes off for the first day (except when sleeping at night) helps to cut down on swelling. Remember that the swelling will generally be the worst on the 2nd or 3rd day after surgery.

Trouble swallowing and opening your mouth wide

The surgery may make it hard to open your mouth wide for several days. You may also find it hard to swallow (in the first few hours) because of the freezing and (over the next several days) because of discomfort and soreness. You may or may not find that this bothers you.

Bruising

You may see some bruising at the corners of your jaws and into your neck after several days. If you bruise easily, you may have more bruising than average.

Feeling unwell and having a fever

You may feel unwell and have a fever for 1 to 2 days after surgery. Sometimes you may feel sick to your stomach or vomit (throw up). This can be because of the pain medication, surgery, and/or the sedatives (medicine used to freeze your mouth and help you relax) used during surgery. This will get better with time.

Hygiene

- **Do not rinse your mouth for the first 24 hours after surgery.** This may push the clot(s) out of the socket(s) and start the socket(s) bleeding.
- After 24 hours, start **gently** rinsing with a salt water mixture (a pinch of salt in a glass of warm water). Let the water fall out of your mouth gently instead of spitting.
- As the gum incision (cut) heals, you can rinse more forcefully.

- Do not rinse for 1 week with anything other than a prescription mouth rinse and salt water.
- You can brush your teeth after 24 hours, but do not brush the area of the extraction(s) for 5 to 7 days.
- If you are temporarily left with some “open holes” or sockets, you may have to rinse more often to keep the sockets clean until they heal.

Eating and drinking

- **Don't eat hot food or drink any hot liquids for 24 hours.** You may eat and drink cold, soft food and liquids during the first 24 hours.
- Try to eat softer foods for the first 2 to 3 days, such as puddings, ice cream, yogurt, and soups. Softer foods will not tear any stitches and will not get stuck in any open sockets.
- After the first few days, avoid the open sockets when eating tougher foods until you find it comfortable to chew.
- It may take several weeks for the gum tissue to grow over the sockets. Food will probably get stuck in the sockets until they close over completely. This may cause problems with bad breath and a bad taste in your mouth. You can rinse with salt water as described on page 4 to help keep your mouth clean.

Infection

Infection can sometimes happen after having wisdom teeth taken out. After the first swelling period (2 to 3 days), continued swelling, pain, and discomfort may be a sign of infection. You may get a fever or feel sick. Pus may drain from the infected socket and leave a bad taste in your mouth. If this happens, call the Clinic at 902-473-2070.

Stitches

If you had stitches in your gums, they will dissolve (go away) on their own in 3 to 8 days. You may see a few spots of blood in your saliva when this happens.

Sedation and anesthesia

You may have been given an intravenous (IV) sedative. If so, you may or may not remember much about your surgery. The doctor and staff will make sure you have recovered enough before you leave.

Although you may feel awake and alert after your surgery, there may still be sedative drugs in your system.

After surgery

- **Do not drive a car or do any dangerous tasks for 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days)** (for example, do not use power tools).
- Do not sign any important legal documents.
- Stay home and rest quietly for at least 24 hours. You must have someone at home with you for the first 24 hours.

Smoking

Smoking can slow down healing or lead to an infection or dry socket. If you smoke, you should try to avoid smoking until the sockets heal. This may take 2 to 3 weeks. If you can't wait this long, it is in your best interest to stop smoking for as long as possible after surgery. Ask staff for resources about quitting smoking or nicotine replacement therapy.



Dry socket

- Dry socket can happen after any dental extraction. After the initial pain from surgery is better, the pain comes back to the same area. The socket becomes very painful and pain medication doesn't help. The pain spreads to the front of the jaw and/or to the ear.
- Depending on how painful it is, you may have to come to the Clinic to get the socket treated with medication. Dry socket is more common in the lower jaw. It is more likely to happen in females than males, females who take birth control pills, older people, and smokers.
- Remember that you may have only a few or all of the symptoms depending on the difficulty of your extraction(s).

Urgent concerns

Call 902-473-5238 between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. If there is no answer, leave a message. If it is after Clinic hours, call Locating at 902-473-2222 and ask to have the oral surgery resident on call paged. Stay on the line and the resident will be with you shortly.

Non-urgent questions

Call the Oral Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic at 902-473-2070 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday).

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

Notes:

Looking for more health information?

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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