

# Post-Op Instructions

Children usually heal quickly after dental treatment. However, there are some things that you, as a parent, should be aware of to ensure that you and your child are comfortable after their treatment. It is important to follow these instructions:

## Following Local Anesthetic

- The most common complication following dental treatment is from a child injuring themselves while they are numb. You need to be VERY CAREFUL to ensure your child does not injure themselves before the anesthesia wears off. Children do not understand the sensation of being numb and their curiosity can lead to a serious injury. Your child may want to bite, poke, chew their lip, cheek or tongue. You need to be EXTREMELY vigilant to ensure they leave the anesthetized area alone. Take special precautions during the drive home as this is when they are most likely to injure themselves. Remind them not to play with their lip.
- Children often do not understand the sensation of being numb and will say they are in pain. Reassure them they are only experiencing the unusual feeling of their mouth being "asleep" and their tooth/mouth will wake up soon. Seeing their reflection in a mirror can be comforting.
- It is common to experience "pins and needles" or itchiness right before the anesthesia wears off. This tingling is a normal feeling that occurs in many children as the local anesthetic wears off. Reassure them the feeling is normal and it will pass in a few minutes.
- Your child will experience numbness for approximately 1-3 hours.

### Diet:

- Don't allow your child to chew anything until the local anesthetic has worn off.
- No hot foods such as soup until you are certain the anesthesia has worn away. Your child cannot feel temperature and can easily burn themselves if the soup is too hot.
- If they are hungry while they are still numb, they can have cold, soft foods that do not require chewing such as yogurt, a smoothie, or apple juice.

## Following Crowns

- Once a stainless steel crown is inserted, your child must avoid sticky foods for the life of the crown.
- It is not unusual for the tissue around the crown to have a bruised appearance for several days or for the saliva to be slightly pink or discolored after having a crown. This will subside within 24 hours.
- Chewing and thermal sensitivity is not unusual. This is usually most pronounced the first 24-48 hours. Rarely, this sensitivity may take several weeks to gradually diminish.
- Your child should eat soft foods for 2-3 days as they get accustomed to the new crown. Ice cream, scrambled eggs, oatmeal, yogurt, rice and beans, and mac and cheese are good options.
- It is very important you floss the crown every day.

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# Following Extractions

## Bleeding

- Your child should bite on the gauze provided for 10 minutes. You may remove and replace the gauze once it is fully saturated in saliva and continue with this until bleeding stops. If bleeding continues beyond one hour, soak a black tea bag with warm water, wrap it in gauze and have your child bite on the gauze wrapped tea bag: this will help stop the bleeding sooner.
- It is not unusual for the saliva to be slightly pink or discolored after having an extraction. This will subside within 24 hours. If the extraction site is still oozing the following morning, your child can bite on a gauze/tea bag for 10 minutes. Don't remove the gauze until it is fully saturated in saliva as this can cause the area to begin bleeding again.
- Avoid rinsing, spitting, sipping through a straw or drinking carbonated beverages today or tomorrow. These activities will prolong bleeding.
- It is extremely unusual to have prolonged bleeding following a baby tooth extraction. Please call the office if your child is having prolonged bleeding.

## Diet

- Your child should eat soft foods for 2-3 days so that no irritation is created in the extraction area. No chips, hard foods, or foods with rough edges. Ice cream, scrambled eggs, oatmeal, yogurt, rice and beans, and mac and cheese are good options.
- A regular diet can be started as tolerated by your child.
- Remember, a nutritious diet promotes healing.

## Activity

- If the child has an activity on the day of an extraction (sports and dance) they should be able to participate as long as the anesthesia has worn away. However, any physical exertion could aggravate the extraction site and cause recurrent bleeding. Adding pressure with gauze will be effective to stop the bleeding.
- However, activity may need to be limited; sometimes a nap is a good idea. Remember, sleeping at least 8 hours a night promotes healing.
- Light activity like a calm walk around the neighborhood promotes healing.
- A clean mouth heals faster. You may brush their teeth and tongue gently tonight, being sure not to irritate the area. If the gums are tender during brushing, run the toothbrush under warm water to soften the bristles. Do not use toothpaste or mouthwash. Floss their teeth, avoiding the healing site.

## Pain

- Children's Tylenol or Advil (ibuprofen) should relieve any minor discomfort. Give ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for discomfort prior to the numbness wearing off if extensive treatment has been performed. Give a second dose 4-6 hours later if needed; not to exceed the recommended dosage in a 24 hour period. Your child should only need this for approximately 12 to 24 hours. If pain persists beyond 48 hours, call our office.
- Mild swelling after an extraction is not uncommon and need not cause alarm. Apply an ice pack for 10 minutes on and 10 minutes off as needed in the 24 hours following tooth removal.

## Notes



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