



You have just undergone a surgical procedure similar to any other surgery and you can expect the same postoperative difficulties. Certain precautions should be taken to prevent or reduce these problems.

1. **DISCOMFORT.** This can be expected for a few days. Take pain medication as prescribed, restrict chewing, apply ice compresses and sleep with your head elevated.
2. **SWELLING.** This is a normal response to surgery. Apply ice packs to the swollen area for 45 minutes each hour for 24 hours. If swelling persists after 36 hours, apply moist heat with a heating pad or hot water bottle. Do this for 1 hour, 4 times daily.
3. **BLEEDING.** Some oozing from the surgical site can be expected for about 24 hours. This can be controlled by biting on gauze pads to put pressure on the area and restrict blood flow. If bleeding persists, apply a moist tea bag to the area, insert a gauze sponge and exert biting pressure for an hour. Avoid spitting, rinsing, smoking or using straws for 24 hours since these things stimulate bleeding. After 24 hours you may rinse gently with a mild salt solution of one teaspoon table salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water. Brush your teeth gently and avoid the area of surgery. Keep your mouth clean!
4. **GAUZE.** Change gauze once every 30 minutes for the first hour or two. Changing the gauze too often can disrupt the clotting process. Gauze does not need to be kept in the mouth longer than two hours.
5. **STIFFNESS.** This will pass as the swelling subsides. Light jaw exercise while applying heat will speed recovery.
6. **DRY SOCKET.** This occurs when the blood clot is lost from the socket. The socket is empty, and considerable deep pain may present itself in the ear, neck, throat or even the eye area. Make arrangements to return to the office.
7. **INFECTION.** Infection may occur due to the presence of bacteria normally found in the mouth. Persistent pain, swelling and drainage will occur. Call the office to be seen or have an antibiotic prescribed.
8. **NUMBNESS.** If any nerves were too close to the tooth roots, the area may be numb or have a “tingling” feeling after the anesthetic wears off. This is rarely of a long duration and will lessen as the healing begins.
9. **DON'T!** Don't rinse forcefully, smoke, use a straw, brush or eat hard foods during the initial healing period. Don't drink alcoholic beverages while taking pain medications.
10. **DIET RESTRICTIONS.** Take liquids (custards, pudding, ice cream, Jell-o, soups) for the first day. You may gradually add soft foods, then resume a normal diet over the next few days. Avoid acidic beverages such as orange juice, soda and tomato based products for at least the first 24 hours. Also avoid spicy foods. Food and beverage temperatures should be on the cooler side for the first day.

IMPORTANT: If you do not feel that healing is progressing normally or if you think a problem may exist, please call the office.