

Family Education Sheet

Home Care Instructions After Wisdom Teeth Extraction (Dept. of Plastic & Oral Surgery)



Boston Children's Hospital

Where the world comes for answers

View more health education materials at
www.bostonchildrens.org/familyeducation

What should I do after surgery?

- The health care team will give you gauze to bite down on to help stop bleeding where your teeth were removed. **Bite down firmly on the gauze for 30 minutes after surgery.** Expect some bloodstained saliva today and tonight.
 - If you still notice bleeding in your mouth, bite down firmly on gauze again for at least 30-40 minutes. Do this until the bleeding stops.
 - You can also bite down on dry tea bags instead of gauze.
- **Keep your head raised**, propped up on 2 or 3 pillows for 24-48 hours after surgery. This will help with swelling and bleeding.
- **Place an icepack or crushed ice** in a plastic bag wrapped in a towel on your face for about 20 minutes every hour. Keep doing this for 24-48 hours after surgery. It will help with swelling.
- You might bite your lip or tongue if it's numb. This is normal. Just be careful until the numbness wears off. Numbness could last 4-6 hours.
- 1 week after surgery, **you need to irrigate** (flush) the areas where your wisdom teeth were with salt water. See instructions on how to do this on page 2.

What should I do for pain?

After **3-4 days**, you should begin to feel better. Swelling should go down and you should have less pain.

- See the Summary List Sheet given to you by your doctor or nurse for medication doses and when to take them.
- **Expect swelling to peak 48 hours** after surgery before it starts to go down. You may have some black-and-blue areas on your face and neck.

What to watch for: dry socket

- Some people get "dry socket," which is when a blood clot dissolves too soon and the socket where the tooth was becomes painful. If this happens, pain usually gets worse on the 4th or 5th day after surgery.
 - If you have pain like this and think you have dry socket, call (617) 355-4513 on weekdays and a nurse will return your call. If you have dry socket, the doctor needs to apply a gauze pack.
- To help prevent dry socket, avoid straws, vigorous exercise and forceful spitting for 5 days.

- Avoid smoking and vaping for at least 2 weeks. This can increase the risk of dry socket and delay healing.

When and what can I eat and drink?

- You can eat and drink as soon as the gauze is removed, sedation has worn off and you feel comfortable. Avoid hot foods while your mouth is numb.
- **Avoid nuts, seeds, popcorn and food that can get stuck in the sockets for 4 weeks after surgery.**
- Most people prefer eating soft foods right after surgery. Go back to your regular diet as you are comfortable.
- Suggestions for soft foods are milkshakes, smoothies (drink them from a cup or use a spoon), yogurt, ice cream, juices, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, beans and pasta.

Can I brush and rinse? Can I wear a retainer?

- You can very gently brush your teeth the day after surgery. You may use toothpaste. Don't rinse your mouth vigorously the day of surgery. This could cause bleeding.
- If you have a prescription for chlorhexidine gluconate 0.12% oral rinse (Peridex™), begin using it the day after surgery. Rinse your mouth well with Peridex™ then spit it out. Use it once in the morning and once in the evening for 1 week.
- Stitches usually fall out/dissolve within the first week.
- It's safe to try wearing a retainer after 48 hours. If it's too sore, try wearing it again the next day until there's no pain.

When should I call my doctor?

Tell your doctor or health care team if you have:

- A fever of 101°F/38.3°C (taken by mouth or ear)
- Increased swelling or swelling that isn't getting better
- Pain that doesn't get better with pain medications

When should I follow up?

- You'll get a follow-up visit phone call from our staff 1 week after surgery.
- My scheduled phone appointment:

____ / ____ / ____

Family Education Sheet

Home Care Instructions After Wisdom Teeth Extraction (Dept. of Plastic & Oral Surgery)



Boston Children's Hospital

Where the world comes for answers

View more health education materials at
www.bostonchildrens.org/familyeducation

Instructions beginning 1 week from surgery on ____/____/____:

Use the oral syringe to irrigate (flush and clean out) where the wisdom teeth were. Irrigating your extraction sites helps get out bits of food to prevent infections.

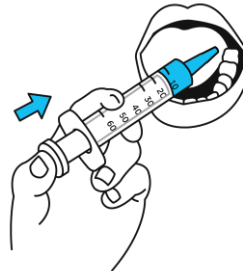
How to irrigate:



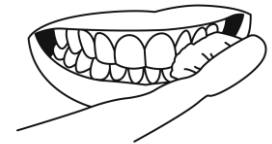
1. Fill a cup with warm water. Add a dash of table salt and stir until dissolved.



2. Fill a syringe with the solution.



3. Put the curved tip of syringe directly into the space where the tooth was taken out. Squirt the plunger to flush. Repeat on both lower sites.



4. Brush your teeth normally.

Repeat steps 1-4 after each meal for 4 weeks.

Contact us

- **Weekdays 7:30 am-5 pm:** Call the Nursing line at (617) 355-4513. This is also the best number for routine questions and concerns.
- **After hours and for emergencies only,** call (617) 355-6363 and ask for the on-call Oral Surgery resident.

For more information

Please visit our website childrenshospital.org/oralsurgeryvideos to watch educational videos that walk you through how to prepare for your wisdom tooth procedure, what to expect on the day of the procedure and home care instructions.

This Family Education Sheet is available in Arabic and Spanish.