

Care of the mouth after oral surgery

Special Care Dental Service

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

Please read and keep this leaflet. It will help you recover and heal as quickly as possible after your treatment.

What to expect

Oral surgery procedures can often result in pain, swelling, bruising and stiffness around the mouth, face and jaws. Swelling may increase over the first 48 hours.

Following surgery there may be a blood stained discharge from the operation site. This is normal for the first day or so.

What to do

For the *rest of the day of surgery*

Avoid

- vigorous mouthwashing
- excessive spitting
- alcohol
- smoking
- exercise
- very hot foods
- very hot drink

since all of these factors would encourage further bleeding. Be aware of the loss of sensation with local anaesthetic and the potential for cheek or lip biting or burning with hot fluids or food.

Do

- Rest
- Take pain killers regularly
- Take antibiotics, if prescribed
- Brush your teeth and keep your wound as clean as possible with gentle brushing

On the *day after surgery***Do**

- Brush your teeth and keep your wound as clean as possible with gentle brushing
- Use 1 teaspoonful of salt dissolved in one tumbler full of warm water as a mouthwash, for 1 minute every 4 to 6 hours. Continue this for ten days (Note: this mouthwash is not a substitute for toothbrushing)
- Continue taking your painkillers, if needed

A few days after surgery, you should begin to improve and feel better. If you start to feel worse, have increasing pain or excessive swelling or bleeding, please contact the Exeter Dental Access Centre on 01392 405700 or the Barnstaple Dental Access Centre on 01271 370562 for advice.

Pain that increases in the 2-3 days following surgery may be a sign of 'dry socket' and you may need to see the dentist for a dressing in the socket.

Bleeding

You may be aware of blood stained saliva in your mouth after surgery. This is normal.

If oozing or bleeding occurs, this can usually be controlled with pressure. Place a rolled up clean, dampened cotton handkerchief or swab over the bleeding point and bite down on it firmly for 30 minutes. Sit quietly in an upright position for an hour after the bleeding has stopped.

If bleeding continues, please contact Exeter Dental Access Centre on 01392 405700 or Barnstaple Dental Access Centre on 01271 370562. For out-of-hours telephone advice, please ring **NHS 111** or attend A&E Department at the North Devon District Hospital or the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital.

Diet

For a few days after surgery:

Do

- Eat soft foods
- Drink plenty of fluids

Avoid

- Crispy or chewy foods
- Very small foods (e.g. peas) that could lodge in the tooth socket within the gum

Stitches

If stitches have been placed during your treatment, they should dissolve over time. They may take several weeks to dissolve completely.

Further information

If you have any concerns or questions, please telephone Exeter Dental Access Centre on 01392 405718 or Barnstaple Dental Access Centre on 01271 370562.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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