



Endodontic Specialists

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Home Care Notes: Following Root Canal Surgery

We are delighted that you have chosen our office for your endodontic treatment. Thank you for allowing us to provide your care. We sincerely hope you have had a pleasant experience.

These suggestions are offered to minimize the discomfort and inconvenience, which follow any surgical procedure. These are suggestions and not absolute requirements in every case. Some of the comments below may not apply to your specific tooth/teeth. Please contact our office with any questions.

ICE Go home as soon possible and apply an ice pack to the external aspect of the surgical area. If you do not have an ice pack, wrap a small towel around a plastic bag filled with ice. A regimen of "on" for 10 minutes/"off" for 10 minutes is suggested from the time of surgery for approximately 6 hours. We suggest you relax in a reclining chair and avoid a completely horizontal position (bed) for a few hours if possible. The ice pack may also be applied for several hours during the morning following surgery.

HEAT As a general rule, we request that you avoid the application of heat outside of the face or in the surgical area the day of surgery. The day following surgery, warm water rinses may be used. Excessive swishing of water or liquids in the mouth is discouraged. You may balloon out the lips or cheeks in the surgical area and hold the water in position until it cools to mouth temperature. This may be performed for 2-3 minutes every 6-8 hours. Do not interrupt sleep to do this.

PAIN The medications listed below are very effective for the relief of pain. Do not minimize their usefulness. You will be given a prescription for a stronger medication if Dr. Madison or Dr. Barr feel it is indicated. If you experience pain that is not controlled by the analgesics listed below, please contact our office or the treating doctor's personal phone numbers (listed at the end of this sheet). Do not take extra medications, such as pain or sleeping pills, without contacting Dr. Madison or Dr. Barr.

Dosages for Over-the-Counter Analgesics

Tylenol: 1 extra-strength (500mg) or 2 regular-strength (325mg) tablets every 6 hours
(Please use Tylenol if you are aspirin or ibuprofen sensitive)

Advil/Ibuprofen/Motrin: 3-4 tablets (200 mg each), totaling 600-800mg every 6 hours

Aspirin: 1 tablet (325mg) every 6 hours

Please take over-the-counter analgesics with food to avoid stomach irritation

MEDICATION

REACTIONS This is a rare event, considering the amount and variety of medications taken by our patients. If you develop a rash, hives, swelling, trouble breathing or swallowing, etc. DISCONTINUE THE MEDICATION! Please contact Dr. Madison, Dr. Barr or your physician.

SWELLING A normal, natural reaction to any injury is swelling. Surgical procedures, although performed to help resolve a condition, are a form of injury. Some swelling is good as it helps to carry the materials and cells the body utilizes for healing and repairing the tissues. If the swelling extends beyond the surgical site, please contact us. Swelling may be more noticeable in the morning since the head will be at the same level as the heart during sleep. This will usually improve in several hours.

BRUISING Due to the amount of tension and stretching of the tissues, and the increase in tissue fluid in the surgical area, you may notice some discoloration or bruising near the surgical site. This should resolve in several days-weeks.

BLEEDING Bleeding from wounds or surgical areas in the mouth can usually be controlled by firm pressure to the area using a gauze pack and thumb pressure. A small amount of blood oozing from the surgical site for a few hours is not unusual. The mixing of this with saliva can make it appear worse than it is. Please do not hesitate to contact us for help or advice.

TEMPERATURE Your body temperature may rise 1 degree above normal due to the healing process. If your temperature rises excessively (2-3 degrees) please contact us. This may be an indication that an infection is starting.

DIET If possible, wait 3-4 hours to eat or drink following surgery. A high protein diet is recommended. Drink additional liquids (juice, broth, milk, water). If you have trouble chewing, nutrient beverage preparations, such as Ensure, are recommended. Resume your normal diet as soon as you can. Please avoid chewing on the side of your mouth that has had the surgical procedure. Do not bite into foods if the surgery was performed on a front tooth.

SMOKING Please refrain from smoking for at least one day following a surgical procedure to allow the blood clot to form adequately. (This might be a good time to consider quitting in view of the overwhelming evidence against cigarette smoking).

ALCOHOL Alcoholic beverages tend to cause dehydration, which slows healing. **YOU SHOULD NOT CONSUME ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WHILE TAKING MEDICATIONS!** Alcohol and pain medications do not mix, nor do they mix with sleeping pills or tranquilizers. There is also some evidence that they interfere with the absorption of some antibiotics.

WORK/

ACTIVITIES If possible, go home and rest following surgery. Go to bed 2 hours earlier for several days. Avoid heavy lifting and exercise for a few days following surgery.

BRUSHING Avoid the surgical area, but brush and floss the remaining teeth. Keeping the surgical site clean is crucial for the healing process. Warm water rinses will help to gently clean the surgical area. Avoid vigorous swishing, which may damage delicate tissue.

SLEEP Sleep does wonders for the body and spirit. Following a surgical procedure, plan to go to bed 2 hours earlier for a minimum of 2-3 days post-surgery.

BIOPSY A sample of tissue removed during surgery may have been sent for a microscopic analysis. This is routine for any surgical procedure and should not be cause for alarm. You will be contacted when the report arrives at our office.

SUTURES Stitches or sutures have been placed in the surgical area. One or more of these may fall out over the course of several days. This is normal and will not usually affect any healing. We have most likely scheduled a follow up appointment in ~1 week. At this appointment, we will remove any remaining sutures and evaluate the status and healing of the surgical area.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

If you should have an emergency after hours, please do not hesitate to contact us via the office pager (828)271-3001, Dr. Madison's home (828)891-3103 or Dr. Barr's mobile (828)335-3640