

Dental Surgery: Home Care

What do I need to know after my child has dental surgery?

Bleeding

It is normal to have some drainage from the site of surgery. It may last for about a day after surgery. The drainage may be pink in color or there may be an overall pink color to the saliva.

Gauze squares

Bleeding is controlled with pressure from gauze packs, the dentist may give you extra gauze packs to take home.

- Your child may leave the clinic with gauze in their mouth. Check and remind your child to bite firmly on the gauze. This should be done for about 1 hour. This helps control bleeding.
- After 1 hour, the gauze can be removed. If there is still bleeding, put in a clean gauze pack. Have your child bite firmly on the new pack for at least 1 hour, or until the bleeding stops.
- If a lot of bleeding continues, please call the dental center (414 266-2040).

Anesthesia

- Anesthetic was used to numb part of your child's mouth for surgery.
- The numb feeling will last from 2 to 4 hours.
- While the mouth is numb, watch your child carefully. Do not let your child chew on their numb cheek or lips. This may cause an ulcer. Ulcers can take 7 to 10 days to heal.
- Do not let your child eat solids until the numb feeling has gone away. Liquids and softer, cooler foods like soft ice cream, applesauce, pudding or Jell-O® are ok while the mouth is numb. You will still need to watch your child so they don't bite the numb areas.

Pain

Your child's dentist will tell you how much pain to expect. The amount of pain will depend on the type of surgery that was done.

- **When less pain is expected.** A child who has a baby tooth taken out may have little pain. An over-the-counter medicine, such as Children's Tylenol® or Children's Motrin® may be used for pain. Follow the instructions on the medicine label.
- **When more pain is expected,** your child's dentist may prescribe a stronger pain medicine. Follow the instructions you are given for using the stronger pain medicine.

Activities

- Have your child take it easy and rest the day of surgery.
- Your child may return to school the day after surgery if there is no active bleeding and pain is under control.
- Your child may brush their teeth the day after surgery but must stay away from the surgery site. After two days, your child may gently brush the surgery area with a soft brush.
- Your child may rinse with plain water or very diluted saltwater a day after surgery. Rinsing should be done after meals and before bedtime for the first few days. Rinses will make the mouth feel better and keep the mouth clean.
 - If using saltwater, use no more than one half teaspoon of table salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water. For the first 24 hours after surgery, your child should gently rinse, but **not spit**. Tell your child to let the water fall out of their mouth. After 24 hours, frequent rinsing is recommended.

Diet

- **Day one: the first 24 hours after surgery.** Your child may have bland, not spicy, soft or pureed foods. Try cream soup, pudding, yogurt and milk shakes.
 - Have your child drink lots of fluids.
 - Do **not** let your child have hard or crunchy foods such as carrots, nuts, popcorn and chips.
 - Do **not** let your child use a straw to drink.
- **Days two and three: for the next 24-72 hours after surgery. Slowly add foods to your child's diet.**
 - Your child should still avoid very hard or crunchy foods that may stick in the surgery area.
 - Do not let your child use a straw to drink.
- **After three days. Your child can resume a normal diet if they feel up to it.** If a certain food causes discomfort, avoid it until the area is fully healed.

Special instructions for your child

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- Pain that gets worse and the medicine does not help.
- Pain that gets worse every day and is still present 3 to 4 days after surgery.
- Bleeding that continues after following the instructions above.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.