

# Information for after oral surgery

Department of oral and maxillofacial surgery and oral pathology

Now that you have undergone a treatment, it will be in your best interests to carefully read the below information and follow the advice in order to promote a speedy recovery. Of course, the symptoms described will not always occur at the same time or to the same extent.

## Eating and drinking, smoking and alcohol

For the first 6 hours after surgery, you must refrain from drinking very hot or very cold drinks. For the first few days after surgery, it is better if you do not eat any hard foods in order to spare the wound. It is better if you do not smoke or drink any alcohol during the first day. Smoking and alcohol impair wound healing.

## Oral hygiene

The wound will heal best if there is good blood clotting. That is why you are not allowed to rinse out the wound during the first day. From the second day onwards, you can brush your teeth normally again using a soft toothbrush, but be careful when brushing near the wound. If a limited mouth opening prevents you from brushing your teeth, you can rinse your mouth after every meal with a solution of half a teaspoon of cooking salt in a glass of lukewarm water.

## Afterpain

It is normal that you experience pain after the treatment. This may take up to five days. You can treat the pain with paracetamol, which you can buy at the chemist's or pharmacy. If necessary, a different painkiller will be prescribed. The local anaesthetic will usually have worn off after 2 to 4 hours. It is best if you start taking the painkillers before the local anaesthetic has fully worn off.

## Swelling

It is normal if you have a swollen cheek and a blue/yellow discolouration. The swelling will go down after 3 to 5 days. If this is not the case, contact the department.

## Limited mouth opening

A limited mouth opening is also common after a surgery. The mouth opening will be normal again after a few days. You can try to further open your mouth now and then.

## Fever

A fever, even up to 39°C, is normal during the first few days. If you suddenly develop a high fever above 39°C or if your fever stays above 38.5°C for more than 5 days, you should contact the department.

## Subsequent bleeding

During the first few days, your saliva may be coloured red by blood clots, which could create the impression of subsequent bleeding. However, this is seldom the case. In case of subsequent bleeding, your mouth contains more blood than saliva. In that case, you should bite firmly on a double-folded gauze or napkin for thirty minutes. If the wound is bleeding on the side, you can press a gauze or napkin on it with your thumb for thirty minutes. You may not use any cotton wadding or check if the bleeding has stopped in the meantime. If the bleeding has not stopped after this, you should repeat the procedure. If this does not help either, you should contact the department.

Sometimes, you are given a gauze to bite on after the surgery. You can spit out this gauze after thirty minutes.

### **Stitches**

Stitches are usually applied using material that dissolves after one to two weeks. If this is not the case, an appointment will be made in order to have the stitches removed. Sometimes, one or more stitches come loose sooner. It will usually not be necessary to re-apply the stitches. Sometimes, a gauze containing a cleansing medication is put inside the wound of a wisdom tooth in order to prevent an infection. If this is the case, an appointment will be made in order to have the gauze removed.

### **Root treatment**

If, for the surgery, a hole was drilled in the tooth or molar in order to clean the root canal, this hole will be closed with a temporary filling.

This temporary filling will have to be replaced by your dentist within 2 to 4 weeks.

### **Open connection between the mouth and maxillary sinus**

Sometimes, the roots of the upper molars protrude up into the maxillary sinus. If these molars are removed, this may create a connection between the mouth and maxillary sinus. This may cause an infection. That is why such connection must be closed carefully using non-dissolvable stitches. It is important that, for 2 weeks afterwards, you avoid any difference in pressure between the nose and mouth to stop the connection from opening again. So do not blow, suck or blow your nose too hard. If you have to sneeze, you should keep your mouth open. The first two days, some blood may still come out of your nose. This is normal and will stop by itself.

### **Anaesthetic**

Although the anaesthetic does not directly affect the ability to drive, it is wise if you only actively start driving again once you have recovered. If the molars in your lower jaw have been treated, it may sometimes happen that, after the anaesthetic has worn off, you are left with a numb sensation in your lower lip. If this is the case, you must contact the department. Normal sensation will generally return after 2 to 8 weeks.

### **Complaints**

If you have any complaints about the surgery or how you have been treated, please inform your attending physician. Your physician will then be able to explain why something was done in a particular way. Such a meeting may clear things up.

Moreover, it is important for the physician to know that you have a problem. It allows you to find a solution together. If you are unable to work it out together or if you are dissatisfied with the result, you can make an appointment with the department head.

The telephone number is (020) 444 1023. If you want, you can also contact the staff members of the patient information centre. They can inform you about the complaints procedure of the VU Medical Centre. The telephone number is (020) 444 0700.

### **Questions**

Outpatient clinic of the department of oral and maxillofacial surgery and oral pathology, reception desk T. Available during office hours, preferably between 8.30 - 9.30 am and 1.30 - 2.30 pm, via telephone number: (020) 444 1559.

After 4.45 pm and at the weekend, you can call (020) 444 4444 and ask for the oral surgeon in attendance.