

**POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING GENERAL ORAL SURGERY**

1. If you have any serious post-op problems or a dental emergency, please contact us right away at **916-554-7373.**
2. **Anesthesia** often leaves the lips, teeth and tongue numb after dental care: **avoid chewing and hot liquids** until numbness wears off to prevent accidental injury.
3. Taking **ibuprofen** (Motrin for example) before all the numbness is gone can help reduce pain/swelling.
4. **Temperature and pressure sensitivity**, as well as **gum soreness**, is to be expected in the next few days. One of the best ways to reduce discomfort and swelling is to **rinse mouth with a warm salt water mixture\*** at least three times each day.  Mix 1 teaspoon of salt with 1 cup of lukewarm water – gargle, rinse, and spit until mixture is gone.
5. Avoid eating sticky, chewy, or hard foods, as well as alcohol and smoking, for a period of time after the procedure; **drink lots of fluids** and eat softer, more nutritious foods to help your body healing process.
6. Maintaining proper and **regular oral hygiene** is essential to helping your mouth heal, as well as preventing any future dental problems. [Carefully brush and floss your teeth twice a day](http://www.josephstandds.com/Cleaning-and-Maintenance.aspx).
7. **After a tooth extraction, it is crucial that a blood clot form** in the area of removal (this is one of the reasons why you will be instructed to keep fresh gauze on the area).
8. **Do not smoke, suck on a straw**, clean teeth near the extraction, or rinse forcefully for at least 24 hours after the procedure. Gently swirl, do not strongly swish, warm salt (3/4 teaspoon salt, 1 cup water)
9. **New denture wearers** must follow the care and cleaning instructions – **careful cleaning** is necessary for dentures and general oral health.
10. **Complete all antibiotic medications prescribed for you, as directed.**

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT AND WHAT TO DO**

* 1. Bleeding may continue for a short period of time or may persist until the next day. Maintain gentle pressure by biting on the gauze packs until it stops. Do not chew on the gauze.   If bleeding starts again, put gauze, a clean wash cloth, or a damp teabag over the bleeding area and bite on it with firm, steady pressure for one hour. If profuse bleeding or any other problems occur, please call [**916-554-7373**](http://www.josephstandds.com/Contact-Us.aspx).
  2. Some degree of swelling and discomfort is to be expected. Discoloration and a slight stiffness of the jaw can be normal. Do not be alarmed. Swelling is expected on a second day and may last for several days. A sore throat or tender nose may also occur.
  3. Do not brush your teeth or rinse your mouth until the morning following the surgery.
  4. Most of the time the stitches dissolve by themselves and small pieces will come out approximately 4-6 days following the surgery.
  5. Eat a normal diet the day after surgery. It is very important that you chew. The jaws will stiffen very quickly if not used. A balanced diet is important to the healing process.
  6. Good dental hygiene is important and should be started the day after surgery. Brush your teeth well, and begin gently rinsing with warm salt water.