



Dental Surgery Post-Op Instructions

What was done?

Your child will have SOME of the following treatment performed during surgery:

- Exam, Radiographs (x-rays), Cleaning, and fluoride
- Crowns (white on the front teeth and/or steel on the posterior molars/canines)
- White fillings
- Tooth nerve treatments
- Extractions, sometimes with local anesthetic

Usually children won't remember much about their surgery, so remind them how well they did.

Generally, the silver caps feel too big and too tight the first week. That feeling will disappear as the bite settles and the child gets used to them.

Sometimes, it is necessary to trim the gingiva (gums) around the front teeth to place beautiful white crowns. Healing will include a little bit of bleeding, followed by a whitish look (like a wet scab), and then pink and healthy. The cleaner you keep the gums, the faster they heal. Start with a wet washcloth and your finger, and move up to normal brushing within a day or two.

Extractions may have a gauze placed to minimize bleeding. Change the gauze when it becomes soaked with saliva or a mixture of blood/saliva. Normally the gum grows over the hole in less than a week.

What can I expect tomorrow?

Usually children don't feel well for the first hour or so. Possible symptoms include sore throat, nose bleeds (from the breathing tube), puffy lips, crankiness and/or sleepiness today. Nausea and fever are uncommon, and usually short-term. Later today and tomorrow should be MUCH better!

Your child will be given some pain medication while asleep (a version of ibuprofen). You may go ahead and give them a dose of Children's Tylenol when you get home, and then another dose of pain medicine at bedtime. See if they need pain medicine tomorrow. Occasionally the dentist will give you a stronger prescription.

After the first day or two, children often start to eat, sleep, and grow better since their teeth don't hurt anymore!

When and What can my child eat?

Your child may drink/eat immediately. Soft foods(noodles, rice, applesauce, milk, pancakes, bread, etc.) will feel best on tender gums at first. If they're still hungry.... Keep going. Heavy, rich foods like burgers, fries and ice cream are probably not a good idea today. Tomorrow they can eat everything.

If your child is not interested in eating today, that's okay; tomorrow should go better. Focus on liquids until then. Sucking on straws and sippy cups can restart the bleeding if extractions were done, so try to avoid them for a few hours.

When should I worry?

Please call, if:

- your child continues to throw up or refuses to eat/drink by the next day.
- your child develops facial swelling and is complaining of pain in one particular spot.
- anything unusual occurs, that arouses your concern.

Activity?

- Children commonly wake from anesthesia upset, confused and dizzy. Children during this stage may need to be held to avoid injury.
- Do not allow your child to run around and aggressively play for several hours after you return home.
- Encourage your child to relax when you get home after dental surgery.

Common Side Effects

- Dizziness: from anesthesia medications
- Shivering: a normal reaction due to emerging from anesthesia
- Coughing and sore throat: from having a breathing tube (Intubation)
- Snoring: from anesthesia medications. Anesthesia team may lift your child's chin to alleviate this. Your child's breathing may seem louder than normal for a few days. If concerned, call your anesthesia provider or take your child to the emergency department.
- Nausea and vomiting: slowly introduce clear liquids and progress to bland foods as tolerated. Keep your child hydrated.
- Swollen lips: moisturize lips to prevent chapping and/or cracking.
- Gum irritation: keep area clean by wiping with a wet washcloth or gauze, and moving up to a gentle toothbrushing. Slight bleeding may occur and will resolve over time. It is very important to keep the gum area clean, which allows proper healing and gums to settle over crowns.

Normal post-op appointments are back at the dental clinic in 1-2 weeks. This is an important visit to "reset" your child's attitude about dental visits. It will be quick, easy and hopefully fun. It will also be an opportunity for you to share any feedback you may have about your child's dental care.