Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

Special Care Dentistry under General Anaesthesia- After the operation

Care instructions for Patients and Escorts



Escorts

The person having the operation requires an escort (a responsible adult over 18 years old) to care for them on a one-to-one basis for 24 hours after the operation. The escort is also responsible for transporting the person having the operation to and from the hospital. This should be by car or taxi if possible, not public transport.
The escort should ensure they read and follow these instructions along with anyone caring for the person in the first 24 hours after the operation.

When can you leave hospital?

Often we are unable to give an exact time as treatment and recovery times differ for each person. Please expect to be there for half a day.

The decision on when you can leave will be made by staff who will take into account your individual circumstances. You will only be allowed to leave hospital if you have a responsible adult to take you home and care for you. You will NOT be able to drive for 24 hours.

When you get home

Follow the instructions in this leaflet and rest as much as possible. There are telephone numbers on the back page to contact if you have any worries about the treatment when you get home.

Care instructions after a General Anaesthetic

The anaesthetic may make you confused, unsteady and prevent you thinking clearly. **This may last for up to 24 hours. During this time the person caring for you will need to give you one-to-one attention.**

You should rest to help you recover safely. If you are unsteady, ask your carer to walk with you and avoid stairs if possible.

You should take your usual medicines unless you are told not to by your doctor.

What NOT to do During the first 24 hours	Common side effects after a General Anaesthetic
• **DO NOT** be in charge of children or other people • **DO NOT** drive a vehicle or ride a bicycle • **DO NOT** cook or use any machinery • **DO NOT** make any important decisions • **DO NOT** post anything on social media • **DO NOT** drink alcohol	• Sickness • Shivering • Sore throat • Thirst • Bruising • Temporary memory loss in over 60 year olds • Minor lip / tongue injury

Care instructions after Dental Treatment

Tooth extractions

- **Numbing injections** are used where teeth are removed to help with pain relief. These are effective for one to three hours. During this time care is required to avoid accidental injury to the cheeks, tongue or lips because of the numbness.

- **Stitches** may be placed around the sockets to help stop bleeding. These will dissolve naturally, but can sometimes take up to four weeks to do so.

- **Dressings** may be placed into the sockets to help stop bleeding. These will either dissolve in a few days or fall out. If they fall out, they do not usually need replacement.

Common side effects	Other Complications
• **Pain** - See details on pain management (next page) • **Swelling**- Can worsen the day after the procedure before improving • **Bruising-** in the mouth, or of the face • **Bleeding**- at the end of the procedure the surgeon will make sure bleeding has stopped. **A small amount of blood in your saliva afterwards is normal**	• **Infection or a dry socket-** If there is pain or swelling which is not improving, contact the emergency numbers on the back of this leaflet. • **Jaw stiffness** or limited mouth opening. If there is no improvement after a few weeks contact your Dentist.

What NOT to do	Pain management
In the first 24 hours • **DO NOT** have anything **hot** to eat or drink • **DO NOT** rinse or spit out • **DO NOT** smoke or drink alcohol • **DO NOT** do any strenuous activity • **DO NOT** poke the area • **Avoid** eating on the affected side • **Avoid** grainy food • **Avoid** brushing near extraction sites	• During the procedure pain relief is given. This will usually be effective for the first 4 hours. • **After four hours, regular over-the-counter pain relief medicine** may be required for the first few days • **Paracetamol or Ibuprofen** can be taken at the recommended dosages, if you are normally able to take these medicines • **Avoid Aspirin** as it may increase bleeding

If the bleeding restarts

If the wound starts to bleed, you will have bright red blood in your mouth. If this happens, take a clean handkerchief/ flannel or similar, roll it up, dampen under the cold tap. Place it over the wound and bite down or apply pressure for 20 minutes. Repeat if necessary. Continued bleeding after pressure is very unlikely, but if this occurs call one of the emergency numbers at the end of the leaflet.

What can be done to help healing ?

Rinse your mouth the **following day** with lukewarm salt water -one teaspoon of table salt to half a glass of warm water. Do this for several days, particularly after meals and last thing at night.
This is recommended, but not essential.

Dental fillings

Some filling materials need 24 hours to fully set; soft foods are advisable during this time.

Teeth may become sensitive or feel different. If this does not settle down, or if you have signs or symptoms of dental pain, contact your dentist.

Dentures

If a denture has been fitted following teeth being taken out, it should be kept in place until the next morning. However, if it is loose, remove it overnight.

The following morning the denture should be removed, the mouth rinsed with warm salty mouthwash and any remaining teeth carefully brushed.

Brush and rinse the denture in cold water and replace immediately. The denture should be worn as much as possible to help it settle in your mouth.

After the first night the denture should be left out each night. If there are any problems with the denture, contact the dentist who made the denture.

General advice



Drink plenty of cool fluids



Brush teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste



Sweet foods and drinks should be kept to mealtimes only, to reduce the risk of tooth decay

Summary of treatment completed

Location in mouth

Tooth Removal*: Upper left Upper Right Lower Left Lower Right
Total: Upper front Lower front

Stiches: Upper left Upper Right Lower Left Lower Right
Upper front Lower front

Fillings: Upper left Upper Right Lower Left Lower Right
Upper front Lower front

Cleaning of teeth: Yes / No
Other:
Follow up appointment:

*Where teeth have been removed, numbing injections would have been given

Emergency Contact Numbers

Monday-Friday
Your own Dentist

Weekend
111 or attend Royal United Hospital A&E

If there are any difficulties breathing or swallowing, development of a high temperature, facial swelling, uncontrollable bleeding or severe pain which is not relieved by pain relieving medicine - seek immediate dental advice

References
Royal college of anaesthetists- Caring for someone who has had a general anaesthetic or sedation- RCOA.ac.uk/patientinfo
British Society of Disability and Oral Health- Provision of oral health care under general anaesthesia in special care dentistry- BSDH.org/documents

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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The RUH, where you matter