

Postoperative care after oral surgery

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Information for patients who have had surgery in the outpatient clinic of the department of oral and maxillofacial surgery.

■ Eating, drinking, smoking and alcohol

When the local anesthesia has worn out, you can eat and drink as long as it is not very hot or cold. Alcohol and smoking have adverse effects on the wound healing and may increase post-operative pain. Do reduce the use of these to a minimum.

■ Postoperative pain, swelling and fever

Pain and swelling are normal post-operative features and may last for several days. In the first 3 days after surgery these complaints usually increase. Afterwards they should decrease. Paracetamol is usually a sufficient painkiller and is easily available at drugstores and pharmacies. If necessary, the oral surgeon will prescribe another painkiller. The local anesthesia will be worn out after 2 to 4 hours. It is advisable to use the painkillers before the local anesthesia has worn out.

A swollen cheek, a bluish coloration of the skin and a decreased mouth opening are normal features for several days. To reduce the swelling, the face can be cooled the first day with cold packages, for example ice-cubes in a small plastic bag wrapped in a washing-glove. Fever, up to 39° Celsius (102° F), is normal in the first couple of days. Please, contact the department if the body temperature rises over 39° Celsius or the fever exists for more than three days.

■ Bleeding

If bleeding continues after treatment, you can try to stop this by applying a compress, for example a folded gauze, on the wound. By gentle pressure of the bite or finger during half an hour, the bleeding will stop in most cases. If not, repeat the procedure. If this again does not work, contact the department.

■ Oral hygiene

Blood clotting in the wound is essential for an uneventful wound healing. Do not rinse the mouth during the first 24 hours. The mouth can be cleaned as

usual after 24 hours. Do not brush teeth at painful spots. You may have been advised to rinse your mouth with chlorhexidine mouthwash. If this is the case, you should start rinsing your mouth 24 hours after the surgery and do this 2 times a day. This mouthwash can be purchased at the drugstore.

■ Sutures

Usually resorbable sutures are used. If not, an appointment for a control-visit will be made.

■ Oral-Antral-Communication

Sometimes an opening from the mouth to the maxillary sinus has to be closed with non-resorbable sutures. These wounds are prone to problems in healing. Therefore it is important to avoid differences in pressure between the mouth and the nasal cavity during the first two weeks. So, keep your mouth open during sneezing and do not blow your nose. Also don't blow chubby cheeks; don't play wind instruments, don't blow up a balloon, etc. The first 48 hours some blood may come out of the nose. This is normal and will stop by itself.

■ Your questions

If you have questions you can contact the outpatient clinic (MKA chirurgie):

- location Alkmaar location: on working days from 8:30 to 16:30, telephone 072 - 548 3160
- location Den Helder: monday, tuesday and thursday from 8:30 to 16:30, telephone 0223 - 69 6435. Please contact Alkmaar on other working days, telephone 072 - 548 3160.
- outside working hours you can contact Noordwest Ziekenhuisgroep Alkmaar on telephone 072 - 548 4444 for consultation with the MKA surgeon on call.

Noordwest Ziekenhuisgroep

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