Tooth Extraction Surgery
Home Care Before and After
(for Dr. Van Gemert’s Patients)

This handout tells you how to take care of yourself when you have tooth extraction surgery at UW Hospital and Clinics. A nurse will go over this handout with you. Please ask questions. If you have questions or concerns after you go home, please call or leave a message for the Dental Clinic at (608) 263-7502 (8 am – 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday).

Before Surgery

1. Dr. Van Gemert will want to know if you have any of these problems, which may require you to take antibiotics before surgery.
   - Heart murmur, artificial heart valve, prolapsed heart valve (MVP), subacute bacterial endocarditis (SBE), rheumatic heart disease, or any other heart problems
   - Artificial joints (hip, knee, etc.)
   - Cancer or on chemotherapy
   - Hematologic (blood) disorder
   - Immunosuppressive therapy/medicines
   - Transplant of any organ or bone marrow
   - Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)
   - Radiation therapy to the head or neck at any time in the past (other than for acne)
   - Biphosphonates, such as Fosamax®

   Tell Dr. Van Gemert if any of the above applies to you.

2. Do not take any aspirin or medicines that contain aspirin for 4 days before surgery. Aspirin can increase bleeding. Let Dr. Van Gemert know if you take blood thinners. These increase bleeding, so you will not take them for 3 to 4 days before your surgery. Check with your local doctor before starting these medicines again.

3. You will need an adult to drive you to and from the hospital the day of surgery. You will also need an adult to stay with you for the first 24 hours.

4. If sedation is used, you should not drive or make any important personal or business decisions until the next day.

After Surgery

Bleeding
You will have some bleeding from your gums for the first 2 to 3 hours. To control this, bite down on folded gauze pads (dry or wet). If you begin to bleed again the next morning and
biting down on the gauze pads does not stop the bleeding within 15 minutes, go to the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Emergency Room in Madison. Have them contact the dentist. If you are not in Madison, go to the nearest emergency room. Ask staff to call the UW Hospital paging operator at (608) 262-0486 to contact the dentist on call.

Oral Hygiene
You must keep your mouth clean. After 48 hours, use ½ teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water and rinse 6 times a day. Do not start this until two days after surgery as your gums might start to bleed again. Brush all of your other teeth with a soft toothbrush starting the day after surgery. This will reduce your risk of infection.

Drinking
You must not use a drinking straw for 5 days. Using a drinking straw could cause your gums to bleed again.

Blowing Your Nose
If you had upper back teeth removed, you must not blow your nose for 2 to 3 days. You may gently sniff the drainage back.

Lying Down
Do not lie flat for the first 24 hours. When you lie down or sleep, prop your head up with 2 or 3 pillows. This will help control swelling. Place ice packs on both sides of your face for 36 hours (20 minutes on, 20 minutes off), to reduce swelling and pain. If you feel swelling inside your throat that makes it hard for you to swallow, go to the nearest emergency room. If the swelling makes it hard for you to breathe, call an ambulance right away (911 in Dane County).

Pain
You may have some pain. For most patients, the pain is moderate. Use the pain medicine that is prescribed for you if you need it. If your pain is mild, use Tylenol®. Do not use aspirin or medicines that contain aspirin or ibuprofen (i.e. Advil® or Nuprin®) for ____ days.

Antibiotics
If antibiotics were ordered for you, take them as prescribed on the label until all the pills are gone. If you get a rash or any other side effects from this medicine, stop taking it. Then call the UW Hospital Emergency Room (ER) at (608) 262-2398. Ask the ER staff to contact the dentist on call for you.

Diet
You will be allowed to drink clear liquids shortly after surgery. Once home, you may have a full liquid diet for the next 24 to 36 hours. Full liquids are foods like milk, ice cream, soup, juices, and milkshakes.

After 24 to 36 hours, you may have a soft diet such as: pudding, scrambled eggs, ground meats, mashed potatoes, and applesauce.

Choose foods that you don’t need to chew.

If you have any signs of infection call the dentist. These include: foul, thick drainage from your gums and fever of 100°F. or higher.
Phone Numbers

For any problems or questions about your surgery, please call the paging operator at (608) 262-0486. Ask for the dentist. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. You will be called back.

If you live out of the area, please call 1-800-323-8942.

Your follow-up clinic visit:______________________________