
Wisdom Teeth Removal: Quick Recovery Guide

What to expect + do's & don'ts (follow your surgeon's instructions if they differ).

The big goals (first week)

- Stop bleeding and protect the clot (prevents dry socket).
- Control swelling and pain.
- Keep the mouth clean without disturbing the surgical sites.
- Stay hydrated and eat soft foods until cleared.

Day-by-day: what to expect

- Day 0 (surgery day): Oozing is normal. Swelling starts. You may feel groggy. Stick to soft/cool foods and fluids.
- Days 1–2: Swelling is usually at its peak. Stiffness and bruising can increase. Pain is typically most noticeable.
- Days 3–4: Swelling should begin to improve. Mouth opening gradually increases.
- Days 5–7: Most patients feel significantly better, but mild soreness and limited opening can persist.

Do's

- Bite on gauze with firm pressure for 30–45 minutes at a time until bleeding slows (change as needed).
- Use ice packs 15–20 minutes on / 15–20 minutes off for the first 24–48 hours (then switch to warm compresses if advised).
- Take medications exactly as prescribed. Stay ahead of pain—don't wait until it's severe.
- Sleep with your head elevated the first 1–2 nights.
- Hydrate frequently. Think “small sips all day.”
- Start gentle salt-water rinses after the first day (if instructed) — let the water fall out, don't forcefully spit.

Don'ts (the “quick & dirty” list)

- No straws for at least 7 days (suction can cause dry socket).
- No smoking/vaping/nicotine — strongly increases dry socket and infection risk.
- No vigorous rinsing, spitting, or using a Waterpik® at the extraction sites early on.

General education only. Your care plan may differ based on your anatomy and procedure

- Avoid heavy exercise for 48–72 hours (can restart bleeding).
- Avoid crunchy, sharp, or seedy foods that can lodge in sockets.

Food ideas (simple and safe)

- First 24 hours: smoothies (no straw), yogurt, pudding, applesauce, protein shakes, lukewarm soups.
- Days 2–7: scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, oatmeal, pasta, soft fish, well-cooked noodles, mac & cheese, smoothies/protein shakes.
- Avoid: chips, nuts, popcorn, rice (often gets stuck), seeds, crusty bread.

Cleaning the sockets

- Brush normally but avoid brushing directly on the surgical sites for the first few days.
- If you were given a syringe: start using it only when instructed (often after day 7). Use gentle water flow to rinse debris.
- Bad taste and mild odor can happen as sites heal—this improves with gentle rinsing and hygiene.

When to call our office

- Bleeding that does not slow after repeated firm gauze pressure (or bleeding that suddenly worsens).
- Fever over 101°F (38.3°C), chills, or worsening swelling after initial improvement.
- Pain that suddenly worsens around days 3–5 (possible dry socket), especially with a bad taste/odor.
- Pus/drainage, worsening bad taste, or concern for infection.
- Trouble breathing or swallowing, or any allergic reaction to medication.

Reminder: discomfort and swelling are normal early on. Protect the clot, hydrate, and keep foods soft until you're cleared to advance.

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