

## Community Dental Service

### Aftercare instructions for adults with additional needs after a general anaesthetic



# Introduction

This leaflet is to let you know what to expect when an adult with additional needs wakes up after having dental care under a general anaesthetic.

## What can be expected when the patient wakes up?

- Their mouth may feel numb if they have had a tooth taken out by the dentist.
- There may be 'packing' where the tooth has been taken out to help control bleeding. This will either dissolve in a few days or fall out. If it falls out, it will be dark brown in colour and should be put in the bin.
- The patient should not feel too much discomfort, as they will have been given pain killers whilst they were asleep.
- You will need to watch the patient to stop them from biting their lip or cheek whilst areas are still numb.
- They should not eat very hot food or drinks whilst their mouth is still numb.
- The patient may need reassurance from you that the 'funny feeling' in their mouth will go away after a couple of hours.

## What if the patient has had stitches?

- We will let you know if they have had stitches in their gum.
- The end of any stitches will be cut short to reduce irritation.
- The stitches will dissolve by themselves in a few weeks.
- They may need reassurance from you to manage any short-term discomfort.

## When can the patient go home?

There are no strict rules for when adults with additional needs can go home after having a general anaesthetic.

The aim is for the patient to be awake and comfortable. However, the patient's individual needs may affect the speed with which they wish to leave the hospital.

We wish to cause as little distress as possible to the patient. Therefore, the patient will be able to leave when you are happy to take them home and you have all the post-operative care instructions.

It is extremely rare that a patient would be required to stay overnight in hospital.

# Aftercare following dental extractions

After a tooth is removed a blood clot will form where the tooth was taken out; this blood clot is what heals the socket. It is therefore important that the patient does not disturb the blood clot with their fingers or other objects.

## Bleeding

The bleeding will have stopped when the patient leaves the hospital. If the socket starts to bleed/ooze at home, and the patient will allow, you should:

- Get a clean handkerchief or tea towel and roll it up like a sausage
- Place it over the socket
- Ask the patient to bite down firmly for 20 minutes whilst they are sitting up, they must not lie down.

If the patient is unable to do the above, keep them as calm and settled as possible, and ask them to sit upright for 20 minutes to see if the bleeding stops.

If the bleeding does not stop, you must seek dental advice (clinic contact numbers for in hours and out of hours are listed towards the end of this leaflet).

## Lukewarm salt water rinse

If the patient is able to use mouthwashes correctly and spit out, a lukewarm salt water rinse can be used the day after the teeth have been removed.

- Add one teaspoon of table salt to half a glass of warm water.
- Ask the patient to hold the salty water in their mouth over the socket for 30 seconds then spit out.
- Do this three times a day for several days afterwards. This will help with the healing process.

If the patient cannot use a mouthwash correctly, encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.

## Pain control

Some discomfort, swellings and bruising can be expected after having a tooth removed.

If the patient is able, they should be helped to follow the guidelines below to reduce problems and help healing:

- Take pain relieving medication such as ibuprofen and paracetamol if their health allows them to normally take them – the dosage on the packet must be followed
- Aspirin should **not** be taken as it may increase bleeding

- No smoking or alcohol for at least 24 hours to reduce the risk of infection and further bleeding
- No active exercise for at least 24 hours
- Avoid toothbrushing in the area where the tooth was removed for the rest of the day. Normal teeth cleaning can be started the next day.

If you are concerned the patient is in a lot of pain or has a swelling after the procedure, you should seek dental advice (clinic contact numbers are listed at the end of this leaflet).

### **Emergency contact numbers**

If you cannot contact your dentist/dental clinic, you should telephone NHS emergency and urgent care services service on 111. You may also go to the Accident & Emergency (A&E) department at your local hospital.

Hospitals with A&E and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery cover are available at:

- Royal Liverpool University Hospital, Liverpool                      Tel: 0151 706 2000
- Aintree University Hospital, Liverpool                                      Tel: 0151 525 5980
- Whiston Hospital, Whiston    Tel: 0151 426 1600
- Warrington Hospital, Warrington    Tel: 01925 635911
- Countess of Chester Hospital, Chester    Tel: 01244 365000
- University Hospital of South Manchester    Tel: 0161 998 7070

### **Out of hours Dental Emergency Services**

- **Cheshire & Merseyside area**  
Services are available 9am - 9.30pm everyday including weekends and Bank holidays. Telephone: 0161 476 9651
- **Greater Manchester area**  
Services are available 5pm - 10pm, Monday to Friday, weekends and Bank holidays between 8am - 10pm. Telephone: 0333 332 3800

## **Bridgewater Dental Clinic information and telephone numbers**

You can ring most clinics Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm and on Fridays from 9am to 4.30pm.

- Ashton, Leigh & Wigan Leigh Health Centre Tel: 01942 483401
- Ashton, Leigh & Wigan Pemberton Health Centre Tel: 01942 481930
- Bolton Lever Chambers Tel: 01204 403215
- Bury Moorgate Primary Care Centre Tel: 0161 4779866
- Chester Fountains Health Centre Tel: 01244 385563
- East Cheshire Dene Drive Primary Care Centre Tel: 01606 544188
- Ashfields Primary Care Centre Tel: 01270 275151
- Halton Hallwood Health Centre Tel: 01928 593400
- Heywood Phoenix Centre Tel: 01706 676751
- Oldham Oldham Integrated Care Centre Tel: 0161 6213614
- Radcliffe Radcliffe Primary Care Centre Tel: 0161 7242112
- Rochdale Nye Bevan House Tel: 01706 664365
- St Helens Dental Clinic Tel: 01744 731395
- Stockport Kingsgate House Tel: 0161 2044720
- Tameside & Ashton Primary Care Centre Tel: 0161 3427150
- Glossop Hyde Clinic Tel: 0161 3662263
- Trafford Seymour Grove Health Centre Tel: 0161 7863330
- Warrington Bath St. Health & Wellbeing Centre Tel: 01925 946293
- Widnes Health Care Resource Centre Tel: 0151 4955042

**For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format, please call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.**