

Oral Surgery Discussion Guide

How will my pain after surgery be managed?

There are many options to help control your pain after surgery. Ask your doctor what the best plan is for you.

How can I minimize the need for opioids? What non-opioid options do I have?

There are a variety of medications you may receive before, during and after surgery to minimize your need for opioids. They may include non-opioids, such as over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen aspirin or ibuprofen, or local anesthetics that are injected by your surgeon during a procedure to numb the area around the surgical site. Depending on your procedure, your doctor may also want you to periodically put an ice pack on your cheek to help avoid swelling.

What do you need to know about me to help customize my pain management?

During your consultation, it's important to bring up your medical history (e.g., medication allergies, breathing/respiratory issues, stomach/GI issues, previous history of substance abuse, if you've taken opioids before and had a negative reaction, current medications you are taking, etc.) in order to help your surgeon better understand your treatment needs. Also informing your surgeon about your living situation (e.g., whether you reside with a caregiver or alone, your access to transportation, etc.) will help them to understand your specific needs and create a better plan for you.

Is this procedure associated with a lot of pain?

Ask your doctor about the level of pain and duration of discomfort that is typically associated with your surgery, so you know what to expect afterwards.

When I return home, what guidelines do I have/what restrictions should I follow? When can I get back to my normal activities?

It's important to rest when you get home and keep your head elevated with pillows when you sleep. Talk to your doctor about how long it might take for you to get back to everyday activities (e.g., returning to work, exercising, driving, eliminating food/dietary or weight lifting restrictions, etc.). Depending on your procedure, there may be things you can do on your own that can help speed your recovery (e.g., rinse your mouth, change your gauze, etc.).

What types of foods can I eat after having wisdom teeth removed?

The first few days after oral surgery, it is best to stick to soft foods at room temperature such as yogurt, oatmeal, mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs or applesauce. You should avoid any hard foods, such as popcorn or pretzels, and steer clear of hot foods and drinks. Also, avoid using a straw to drink beverages, as the suction may cause a painful condition known as dry socket. Talk to your doctor about what foods and dietary restrictions are best for your recovery.

How long will it take to fully recover from surgery? What will it involve?

The recovery from surgery is personal and can vary depending on the surgery performed, your overall health and you. Talk to your doctor about what you will need after your surgery.

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What happens when the medications from surgery wear off?

The type of medication(s) you receive can depend on the type of procedure you have. Talk with your doctor about any pain or discomfort you may feel after surgery and make sure you have a plan in place. Also, ask about non-opioid options that provide pain relief for the first few days following surgery, often when pain is at its peak.

If You're Prescribed An Opioid, Ask These Questions:

- Is this safe to take with my other medications?
- Is this the lowest appropriate dose/number of pills?
- When can I stop taking this, and how should I wean off?
- How can I properly dispose of the pills if I don't use all of them?
- Is there an alternative that I can take?