OnSite SURGICAL PARTNERS

# Managing Pain After Oral Surgery

Extractions, Implants, and Bone Grafting

Research shows that ibuprofen and acetaminophen taken together control dental surgery pain better than opioid (narcotic) medications such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, or codeine, with fewer side effects. Stay ahead of the pain: take your first dose before the numbness wears off.

## Your Pain Medication Schedule

Unless your surgeon has given you different instructions, take **both** of the following together, **every 6 hours for the first 48 hours**, even if you are not in pain. This also controls swelling.

| Medication | Dose | How Often | Max in 24 Hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) | 400 mg<br>(two 200 mg tablets) | Every 6 hours, with food | 1,600 mg<br>(8 tablets) |
| Acetaminophen (Tylenol Extra Strength) | 1,000 mg<br>(two 500 mg tablets) | Every 6 hours | 4,000 mg<br>(8 tablets, all sources combined) |

**Example schedule:** 8 AM · 2 PM · 8 PM · 2 AM (set an alarm for the overnight dose during the first night).

**After 48 hours:** continue the same schedule as needed, reducing doses as your pain improves. Most patients need little or no medication after day 3–5.

## Important Safety Rules

- **Do not exceed the doses above.** More medication does not mean better pain control and can cause serious harm.
- **Check for hidden acetaminophen.** It is also in Norco, Vicodin, Percocet, Tylenol #3, NyQuil, DayQuil, Excedrin, and many cold and flu products. If you take any of these, count them toward your daily acetaminophen limit.
- Do not take other NSAIDs (Aleve/naproxen, aspirin, Celebrex) together with ibuprofen.
- Take ibuprofen with food or milk to protect your stomach.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking these medications.

## Do Not Take Ibuprofen If You:

- Are allergic to ibuprofen, aspirin, or other NSAIDs, or have asthma triggered by aspirin
- Have a history of stomach ulcers or GI bleeding
- Have kidney disease, heart failure, or recently had heart bypass surgery
- Take a blood thinner (warfarin/Coumadin, Eliquis, Xarelto, Plavix)
- Are pregnant, especially after 20 weeks

## Do Not Take Acetaminophen If You:

- Have liver disease, or drink 3 or more alcoholic drinks per day
- Are allergic to acetaminophen

If any of these apply to you, or you are unsure, tell your dental office before your surgery so we can adjust your plan. Your physician or pharmacist can also advise you.

## If You Were Prescribed an Opioid

Opioids are prescribed only occasionally, in small amounts, for severe pain the schedule above does not control.

- Use it only for breakthrough pain, in place of (not in addition to) the acetaminophen dose if it already contains acetaminophen.
- Take with food to reduce nausea.
- Do not drive, drink alcohol, or take sleep aids or anti-anxiety medication while using it.
- Constipation is common. Drink fluids and use an over-the-counter stool softener if needed.
- Store it securely, away from children and others. Dispose of unused tablets at a pharmacy take-back location or a police department drop box.

## Other Ways to Reduce Pain

- Ice your face, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off, for the first 24–36 hours.
- Rest with your head elevated for the first 2–3 nights.
- Stay hydrated and eat soft foods. An empty stomach makes medication-related nausea worse.

**Call your dental office** if your pain is not controlled by this schedule, or if pain gets worse after day 3. If you have difficulty breathing or swallowing, or swelling spreading to the eye or neck, call 911.