Oral Health: Post-Operative Care for Dental Extractions

Document Number  PD2013_026
Publication date  19-Aug-2013
Functional Sub group  Clinical/ Patient Services - Medical Treatment
                       Clinical/ Patient Services - Nursing and Midwifery
Summary  This policy is to ensure that a state wide best practice approach to
         management of bleeding following dental extractions or oral surgery is
         provided to patients who require this care.
Author Branch  Centre for Oral Health Strategy
Branch contact  Strategic Development Planner 02 88214300
Applies to  Local Health Districts, Government Medical Officers, NSW Ambulance
            Service, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals
Audience  Medical Staff - Emergency Departments, Nursing, Ambulance Services
Distributed to  Ministry of Health, Tertiary Education Institutes
Review date  19-Aug-2018
Policy Manual  Patient Matters
File No.
Status  Active

Director-General
This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is mandatory
for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.
ORAL HEALTH: POST-OPERATIVE CARE FOR DENTAL EXTRACTIONS

PURPOSE

The ‘purpose’ of this policy is to ensure that a state wide best practice approach to management of bleeding following dental extractions or oral surgery is provided to patients who require this care.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The ‘mandatory requirements' to achieve best practice in post-operative care after a dental extraction are contained in the Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW ‘Post-Operative Care for Dental Extractions Standard Operating Procedures: what registered doctors, nurses and ambulance personnel need to know’.

The most important points in the procedure document are:

- the gauze swab placed in the oral cavity is not to be moistened with any solutions, and should be placed correctly
- follow local emergency department procedures for obtaining urgent advice and treatment for presenting dental conditions, and
- ensure that the patient has been advised of the post-operative care required and initial steps to take if bleeding recurs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The ‘implementation’ component of the ‘Post-Operative Care for Dental Extractions Standard Operating Procedures’ is for all medical staff (registered doctors, nurses and ambulance personal) that are presented with post-operative care of an extracted tooth or teeth.

REVISION HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Amendment notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2013 (PD2013_026)</td>
<td>Deputy Director General Population Health</td>
<td>This is the first policy in Oral Health: Post-Operative Care for Dental Extractions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATTACHMENT

1. Post-Operative Care for Dental Extractions Standard Operating Procedure: what registered doctors, nurses and ambulance personnel need to know.
Post-Operative Care for Dental Extractions Standard Operating Procedure: what registered doctors, nurses and ambulance personnel need to know.

Issue date: August-2013
PD2013_026
CONTENTS

1 BACKGROUND
   1.1 About this document
   1.2 Key definitions
      1.2.1 Glossary of Terms
   1.3 Related NSW Ministry of Health policies

2 Post-Operative Instructions
   2.1 Care by clinical staff
      2.1.1 Management of the swab

3 References
1 BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

This document has been developed to ensure that safe and effective procedures for post-operative care for dental extractions are followed by healthcare professionals, and that patients are offered appropriate care.

1.2 Key definitions

In this document the term:

- **Must** – indicates a mandatory action required that must be complied with.

1.2.1 Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gauze Swab</td>
<td>is sterile or non-sterile 10cm x 10cm x 8ply gauze made from cotton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-oral tape</td>
<td>is a general purpose, breathable surgical paper tape, which is latex-free and hypoallergenic, it should adhere well to the skin yet leave minimal adhesive residue upon removal. It is attached outside the mouth to enable easy removal of a swab placed in the mouth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Related NSW Ministry of Health policies

- Oral Health - Eligibility of Persons for Public Oral Health Care in NSW PD 2009_074
- Oral Health Specialist Referral Protocols PD2011_071
- Oral Health Referral Form for Medical Emergency Departments GL2010_008
2 Post-Operative Instructions

2.1 Care by clinical staff

If a patient presents with bleeding following dental care, clinical staff should:

- ensure that the attending clinician is wearing personal protective equipment
- check for signs of shock and manage appropriately
- clean the mouth, remove any blood clots and identify the site of bleeding
- roll up a piece of dry gauze into a swab, so that it is narrow enough to fit between the teeth on either side, but broad enough to cover the whole socket
- apply the dry swab to the site of bleeding, ensuring that the gauze is pressed onto the site of bleeding and not impeded by adjacent teeth (refer to picture)

- not apply any topical local anaesthetic solutions to the socket or the swab
- ensure the swab is sufficiently bulky that when the jaw is closed the swab exerts pressure on the socket (refer to picture)
- apply constant finger pressure to the gauze, or have the patient close the mouth and bite firmly on the gauze, for at least 15 minutes
- once the bleeding has stabilised and the patient is safe to return home, ensure that the patient has been advised of the post-operative care required and initial steps to take if bleeding recurs, and has been advised to contact an oral health call centre, relevant private dental practitioner or an emergency department if concerns arise.

Note: If bleeding persists after 30 minutes of constant pressure, immediately follow local procedures for obtaining urgent advice for management of emergency dental conditions.

To ensure correct referral to the public dental service, the NSW Oral Health Referral Form should be used. This form can be downloaded from the Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW web page http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/owner/1017.asp

2.1.1 Management of the swab

If there is a concern that the gauze swab may be dislodged whilst the patient is recovering from a general anaesthetic, or that the patient may have a risk of aspiration or choking on the swab, the gauze swab should be placed with an extra-oral tag taped to the patient’s cheek, to allow easy removal of the swab should it become dislodged.
3 References


