

# Managing Oral Pain and Infection



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Maybe you've had a toothache for several weeks, and it seems to have escalated. Or perhaps there is severe sensitivity to hot and cold and the pain is unbearable. Perhaps you've had a "gum boil" for several months that does not seem to resolve. Or perhaps you've woken up to painful swelling on your gum or side of your face.

Pain and swelling are most commonly the result of inflammation or infection from teeth decay, gum disease, and other pathological conditions. Either way, the pain can be severe. Infection-related swelling can spread quickly to other areas of the head and neck and lead to dangerous complications.

These emergencies require immediate attention. Here are some questions and information to help you make the best decision.



## What are common causes of pain:

Oral pain is most commonly caused by tooth decay, abscess, infection, or cracks. The nerve of the tooth can become inflamed resulting in temperature sensitivity. If inflammation is not treated early, the nerve can undergo necrosis and lead to an abscess. Either way, there is severe and throbbing pain that can radiate to different parts of the jaws.

## What causes swelling:

The most common cause of swelling in the oral and facial area is an infection. The infection is characterized with swelling, severe pain, difficulty opening mouth, difficulty swallowing, and fever. Whether due to tooth decay, gum disease or a crack, necrosis of the tooth nerve can lead to an abscess. This can further spread, causing facial infection presented as swelling. Infection can worsen and spread to other areas of the face and neck.

## What is the best treatment approach?

A tooth with significant sensitivity, decay, and an abscess may receive root canal treatment if the tooth is restorable and has a good prognosis. However, with severe breakdown, fracture, or facial infection, the best treatment option is extraction of the offending tooth.

## Emergency treatment for infection

**includes:** 1) Elimination of the infection source (extraction or root canal treatment) 2) Antibiotics and 3) Drainage if indicated. There will be close collaboration between your dentist, oral surgeon, and endodontist.

Remember, antibiotics alone is not adequate for treatment of infections.

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## How soon should I see a dentist?

The presence of pain or swelling needs **immediate** evaluation by your dentist or oral surgeon. Infection can spread very quickly and cause life-threatening complications.



## What is the emergency treatment for pain:

Pain and swelling can occur suddenly and progress rapidly. Early evaluation and immediate extractions or root canal treatment are the only ways to solve the problem. Until you can see your dentist or the oral surgeon, here is what you can do:

1. Take 400-600 mg Ibuprofen (2-3 tablets of Advil) or 500-1000 mg of Tylenol every four hours for pain.
  2. If pain becomes more severe, you may take Vicodin or Tylenol #3 prescribed by your dentist.
  3. Call your dentist immediately for evaluation or referral to an oral surgeon.
  4. Mild inflammation may resolve by simply brushing the area and keeping it clean.
  5. Treatment (extractions or root canal treatment) should be done as soon as possible before a potential increase in pain and infection.
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## What is the emergency treatment for pain and swelling?

If experiencing pain, facial or gum tissue

swelling, drainage of pus, or difficulty opening mouth, follow these instructions:

1. Take 400-600 mg Ibuprofen (2-3 tablets of Advil) or 500-1000 mg of Tylenol every four to six hours.
  2. Contact Dr. Kazemi for immediate evaluation.
  3. Begin antibiotic therapy immediately. If you can not see an oral surgeon right away, ask your dentist to prescribe antibiotics and pain medication.
  4. The appropriate treatment should be done as soon as possible, before infection spreads and involves other areas of face with potential life-threatening consequences. The treatment may include extraction and drainage of infection.
  5. Do not apply ice. It does not improve swelling caused by infection.
  6. Do not place heat pack on face as it can draw the pus from the infection towards the skin and cause scarring.
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## How long before pain and swelling resolves?

Following appropriate treatment, pain subsides significantly and resolves completely within five to seven days. Pain medications can provide relief during this period. Swelling responds well to the treatment and antibiotics and resolves gradually over seven to 10 days.

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## Safety of the procedures:

Emergency oral procedures are safe and predictable when performed by a skilled and experienced oral surgeon. Specialized instruments and techniques are used for teeth extractions. Dr. Kazemi specializes in management of oral pain and infections and has treated thousands of patients successfully. The office is also designed and equipped for such oral surgical procedures and his team receives specialty training and education for total patient care. Methodical, exacting, and detailed protocols are followed strictly to make sure every patient has a safe, comfortable, and successful extraction.

## **What is the best anesthesia option for emergency treatments and how safe are they?**

The best way to manage anxiety and make sure you have the best possible experience is to opt for IV sedation. It is the most recommended and chosen by many patients. Dr. Kazemi is trained and licensed in administering office anesthesia. Its safety is attributed to continued monitoring techniques, the short-acting nature of the medications, availability of emergency equipment, and most importantly proper training of the surgeon and the staff. Other options are local anesthesia, with or without nitrous oxide (laughing gas) but patient is completely awake and fully aware of the procedure.

IV sedation is a very safe and predictable in healthy patients when administered by an experienced clinician with proper training and accepted protocol. The patient is continually monitoring during anesthesia and emergency equipment is on hand, if necessary. The medications used have a long history of safety and are short-acting. Anesthesia is also safe in patients with respiratory problems or cardiovascular disease, providing that precautions are taken. To avoid possible airway compromise, patients with severe upper respiratory compromise, such as severe cold with stuffy nose and productive cough are asked to postpone the surgery until they feel better.

The facility is equipped with emergency equipment and medications and the entire team is trained to manage any possible complications quickly and properly. The surgeon is CPR and ACLS certified and can manage any complications that arise effectively and quickly. Suburban Hospital is in close proximity in the event additional assistance is required.

## **Managing your anxiety about having surgery:**

Anxiety is not uncommon among people having their wisdom teeth extracted. This anxiety is mostly related to hearing of others' bad experiences with excessive pain, swelling, and complications. We resolve this in several ways. First, the use of IV sedation allows patients to nap during the surgery. This helps greatly to make them comfortable and reduce anxiety. Second, patients will be cared for by a group of affable staff members who take time to personally connect with each patient and allay their fears and concerns. Third, the surgery is done conservatively, which minimizes or avoids swelling, pain, and complications.

## **How soon can you return to work, school, or normal activities?**

Most patients return to work, school, or some normal activities one to two days after surgery. Most schedule their surgery on a Friday and are ready to return to work or class by Monday. There is no problem with traveling or flying the following day, although it's best to rest for a day or two. Of course, there are always variations in overall response and recovery.

## What is the expected recovery?

If you required extraction of a tooth and possible incision and drainage of the associated infection, the recovery may be longer than usual. It is important to complete the antibiotics as prescribed and follow these instructions:

- **Pain:** Level and duration of pain depends on the complexity of the surgery, technique, and patient's tolerance. Most patients experience three to four days of elevated pain, commonly managed with pain medications such as Vicodin or Percocet. As pain gradually diminishes over the next two to three days, Ibuprofen (Advil) or Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be used. After seven to ten days, most patients no longer have pain and may stop their medications.
- **Swelling:** Any swelling related to infection resolves gradually seven to 10 days. It is very important to take your antibiotics as prescribed and complete its course. Swelling related to surgery will maximize in 36 to 48 hours following procedure, and gradually taper over the next five to seven days. Ice helps to reduce surgical swelling in the first 24 hours, but ineffective for infection-related swelling.
- **Diet:** Upon arrival home, patients may have water, juices, soups, shakes, puree, and very soft food. A soft diet is recommended up to five to seven days. No hard, crispy, or spicy should be eaten during this period. The general rule is if you have to chew, it's probably too hard. After seven days, patients may gradually return to normal food.
- **Activity:** Get plenty of rest on the day of surgery. Some patients may feel well enough the following day to walk and go out. That's all right, but take it easy. Avoid strenuous activities for the first two to three days. Refrain from sports, lifting, or doing anything that requires exertion. After three days, if patients feel more comfortable, they can walk, go for a gentle swim, or do very low-impact exercise. Mild activities may cause some pain but not enough to disturb the surgery site or open the sutures.

# Planning Your Visit



## Planning the procedure around your schedule:

We understand that taking time off work or school for a procedure may be challenging. Therefore, we have designed the **All-In-One Visit** program that provides both consultation and procedure on the same day. Post-operative follow-up, although always recommended, can be done via telephone or email.

Forms maybe completed prior to your visit on our Web site or by fax. These prearrangements make it easy to have diagnostic X-rays, consultation, and procedure completed **all on the same day**. Finally, in five to seven days, Dr. Kazemi will check up on patient's progress via phone or email. If there was infection related swelling, several follow up appointments may be necessary. As a convenience, prescriptions are available right in our office. We offer a flexible appointment schedule, Monday through Friday between the hours of eight and five, and early morning or late-day appointments per special arrangements. Weekend appointments are available for our VIP and presidential service packages and can be reserved per special arrangements.



## What your escort can do during your procedure?

Your loved ones can relax in our lounge and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and read the daily newspaper and wide selection of magazines. Or take advantage of our free Wi-Fi computer lounge to check emails and browse the internet on either your computer or ours. They may also take a stroll on convenient Bethesda Avenue and visit the many stores, coffee shops, and restaurants. We'll call them when procedure is complete so they can return to office and join you in the recovery room.

## Necessary information prior to the procedure:



- Patient registration form, medical history, signed HIPAA forms. All forms may be completed online or sent by fax prior to your visit.
- Referral form from your dentist indicating the recommended wisdom teeth for extraction and other treatments.
- Panoramic X-ray done within the past six months. Your dentist may send it to us electronically or give you the film to bring. If you don't have a panoramic X-ray, we can obtain one in our office.



## What is the cost, payment options, and insurance protocol?

The cost of the surgery depends on the number of teeth extracted, need for drainage of infection, and type of anesthesia. Once an X-ray has been reviewed and treatment plan completed, the exact cost will be discussed. Wisdom teeth extraction and anesthesia are often considered under dental insurances. We have several payment options including short- and long-term plans. Those with insurance may choose to pay the surgical fees and receive reimbursement directly from their insurance company, or pay an approximate co-pay and we will submit the necessary claims. If you need special financial assistance to prepare for your desired procedures, a separate consultation appointment is recommended.

## About Dr. H. Ryan Kazemi



**Dr. H. Ryan Kazemi** is an oral and maxillofacial surgeon certified by the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. He received his dental degree from the University of Pennsylvania, School of Dental Medicine in 1990. Following a one-year internship at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, he pursued surgical training at The Washington Hospital Center in Washington, DC, where he received his certificate in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. Dr. Kazemi has practiced in Bethesda, Maryland, since 1997, providing a full spectrum of oral and maxillofacial surgery procedures with emphasis on extractions, dental

implants, bone grafting, and corrective jaw surgery.

Dr. Kazemi is a diplomat of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, and an active member of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Academy of Osseointegration, American Dental Association and Entrepreneur Organization.

He has served as the founder and president of several dental and implant study clubs in the Washington DC area. Dr. Kazemi has published and lectured extensively on dental implants, bone grafting, and practice management. His newsletter, *To-The-Point* is read by more than 2000 dentists every month. He is also the founder of DDSForums.com, a professional networking site for dentists.

Dr. Kazemi serves on the medical staff for D.C. United, the major soccer league team in Washington, D.C. and the US national soccer team for the care of their athletes.

### What sets us apart:

- Treatment by board-certified oral surgeon
- Predictable results
- Speedy recovery
- Flexible scheduling
- On-time appointments
- Safe and comfortable atmosphere
- Warm and personable service
- Quick access and response when you need us



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