

# Let's Talk About...

**D**ental care is a normal part of every childhood. Your child may have fillings, teeth removed, teeth cleaned, fluoride treatments, crowns, or caps. After the procedures, you will need to help your child take care of her teeth. Doing so will ensure the procedure is effective.

## **Diet**

### **When can my child eat?**

Your child should avoid eating anything sticky, hard, or chewy for one day. Offer her soft foods like yogurt, macaroni and cheese, noodles, scrambled eggs, pudding or applesauce.

### **What should I do about nausea and vomiting?**

Sedation from the procedure, car movement, and pain medicine can all cause nausea and vomiting. You can control nausea and vomiting by having your child lie quietly and decrease movement. You should also wait to have your child drink until she feels less sick. At times it is impossible to prevent vomiting. If your child vomits, wait until her stomach has settled down (about 30 minutes after vomiting), then have her take small sips of clear liquids or ice chips (small pieces of ice) every 5 to 10 minutes. If your child is under 2 years old, try giving her water, apple juice, or Pedialyte®. If she is older, try a Popsicle®, Gatorade®, Jell-O®, decaffeinated Coke®, or 7-UP®. Help your child drink every 15 to 30 minutes, but don't force it. If the nausea returns, wait another 30 minutes and try again. Once your child has stopped feeling sick, begin giving solid foods.

### **How will I know if my child is drinking enough?**

After the procedure, your child may have low body fluids. Some signs of not having enough

## **Care After Dental Restorations or Removal**

to drink include dark yellow urine, a dry mouth (no spit), chapped lips, and the soft spot on your baby's head sinking inwards. If you notice any of these, give your child more to drink. She should urinate normally within 24 hours after the procedure. A baby should have six to eight wet diapers in a 24-hour period. An older child should urinate every 6 to 8 hours.

## **Pain**

### **How can I tell if my child is in pain?**

No surgery is pain free, but it is important for your child to be comfortable so she can heal. If she is older, you can talk to her about her pain. If your child is younger or developmentally delayed, she may moan, whimper, make a face of pain, cry, be irritable, be inactive, not eat, or not sleep. In all cases, you should comfort your child and listen to her concerns.

### **How can I help with my child's pain?**

It is important to offer comfort and listen to your child's concerns. Use the pain medicine ordered by your doctor around the clock to control pain. You may also use Children's Tylenol®. Many prescription pain medicines also contain Tylenol®, so check with your nurse to make sure you are not giving more Tylenol® than is safe. You may also use children's ibuprofen.

A cold cloth or an ice bag placed on your child's cheek will help with pain.

Use the space below to write down questions you may have before you go home.

## **Wound Care**

With tooth removal, a small amount of bleeding is normal. Usually a blood clot forms in the empty socket and stops the blood from

flowing. Drinking through a straw or rinsing the mouth very hard could dislodge the clot and your child could start bleeding again. For the first few days, have your child rinse her mouth gently. When she brushes her teeth, have her avoid the teeth close to the empty socket. Have your child bite on a gauze pad to help the extraction site clot, if she's old enough to do this. Replace the gauze every 1 to 2 hours as needed.

## Behavior

### What is normal behavior after surgery?

It is very normal to see behavior changes after surgery. If the changes last longer than 3 to 4 weeks, call your pediatrician. Some examples of changes include regression (bed wetting or acting out), changes in sleep and eating patterns, or nightmares. Being patient with your child will help reduce these changes.

Understand that your child has been upset by surgery. Most changes in behavior only last a few days to 2 weeks.

## Activity

### How active can my child be?

In general, any activity that causes pain to the mouth area should be avoided. Surgery often affects children's coordination. To keep your child safe, it is important to follow these guidelines:

- Don't let your child walk without help.
- Don't let your child climb ladders, go down slides, climb on jungle gym equipment, ride a bike, ride a scooter, snowboard, or roller blade.
- Don't allow teenagers or young adults to drive a car or operate anything that requires quick decisions.



All of the information contained in the *Let's Talk About* . . . series is for educational purposes only. This educational information is not a substitute for medical advice or for care from a physician or other health care professional. If you have questions about your child's health, contact your health care provider.

## When should I call the doctor?

Call your doctor or nurse, if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature over 101 °F
- Drainage from the socket area
- Increased swelling
- Bleeding that won't stop
- Numbness of fingers and toes
- Uncontrolled pain
- Signs of dehydration (dry mouth, less than 6–8 wet diapers, lack of tears)
- Excessive diarrhea or constipation
- Chest pain or shortness of breath: **GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR CALL 911!**

## How do I call the doctor?

Call your dentist's office at 801.662.3900 during office hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and speak to the nurse. If the office is closed, call the operator at Primary Children's Medical Center, 801.662.1000, and ask for the Dental Resident. The resident can be reached at any time.

## Follow-up appointment

Call your dentist's office as soon as possible to make a follow-up appointment.

For further questions, access our Internet site at: [www.primarychildrens.com](http://www.primarychildrens.com) then click on the Kids Health icon. (A PCMC partnered online health resource for families.)

**Doctor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Children's Medical Center**

**Definition of (Surgery Performed):**

I have been informed and received the **Discharge Instructions** for (Surgery Performed)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pediatric Education Services  
801.662.3500 Rev. 03/07

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