

Operculectomy (Gum Flap Removal)

An operculectomy is often performed to remove a flap of gum over a partially erupted tooth (commonly a wisdom tooth).

- **Cleaning the Flap:** Because this area is prone to trapping food, use a soft, single-tufted brush to keep the area underneath the flap clean once the initial tenderness subsides.
- **Salt Water Rinses:** Vigorously (but gently) swish warm salt water to help flush out debris, especially after meals.
- **Observation:** It is normal to feel some stiffness in your jaw muscles. Warm, moist heat applied to the outside of the face can help with this.

General Recovery (For All Procedures)

- **Pain Management:** Take over-the-counter pain relievers (like Ibuprofen or Paracetamol) as directed, ideally *before* the anesthetic wears off to "stay ahead" of the discomfort.
- **Diet:** For the first 24–48 hours, stick to **cool, soft, or room-temperature foods** (e.g., yogurt, smoothies, mashed potatoes, applesauce). Avoid anything hot, spicy, crunchy, or acidic.
- **Activity:** Rest for the remainder of the day. Avoid strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for 2–3 days.
- **Avoid Suction: Do not use a straw** or engage in vigorous spitting for at least 48 hours, as the suction can dislodge the blood clot and delay healing.
- **Oral Hygiene:** Keep your mouth clean to prevent infection. You can usually brush your teeth the following day, but be very gentle and avoid the surgical site. Avoid using electric toothbrushes or water flossers near the area for about 4 weeks

When to Call Your Dentist

Contact your office immediately if you experience:

- **Excessive bleeding** that does not stop after applying firm pressure for 30 minutes.
- **Fever** (over 101°F/38.3°C) or signs of infection (pus, foul-tasting discharge).
- **Severe pain** that is not relieved by your prescribed or recommended medication.
- **Increasing swelling** after the first 72 hours.