



TOOTH EXTRACTION: POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Anesthetics:

Before the extraction, you will be given an anesthetic to reduce your discomfort. Your mouth will remain numb for a few hours after extraction. While your mouth is numb, you will want to be careful not to bite your cheek, lip or tongue. After the extraction, do not eat any foods that require chewing while your mouth is numb. The numbness should go away within a few hours. If it doesn't - contact our office.

BLEEDING:

Your dentist may place a gauze pack on the extraction site to limit bleeding. This will also help a blood clot to form, which is necessary for normal healing. This gauze pack should be left in place for 30 to 45 minutes after you leave the dentist office.

Do not chew on the pack. There may be some bleeding or oozing after the pack is removed. If so, here's what to do:

- Fold a piece of clean gauze into the pad thick enough to bite on. Dampen the pad with clean, warm water and place it directly on extraction site.
- Apply pressure by closing the teeth firmly over the pad. Maintain this pressure for about 30 minutes. If the pad becomes soaked with blood, replace it with a clean one.
- Do not suck on extraction site or disturb it with your tongue.
- A slight amount of blood may leak from the extraction site until a clot forms. However, if heavy bleeding continues, call your dentist. (Remember though, that a little bit of blood mixed with saliva can look like a lot of bleeding.)

DO NOT DISTURB:

The blood clot that forms in the tooth socket is an important part of the normal healing process. You should avoid doing things that might disturb the clot. Here is how to protect it:

- Do not smoke, or rinse your mouth vigorously, or drink through a straw for 24 hours. These activities create suction in the mouth, which could loosen the clot and delay healing.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages or mouth wash containing alcohol for 24 hours.
- Limit strenuous activity for 24 hours after the extraction. This will reduce bleeding and help the clot to form.
- Sometimes the blood clot does not form in the first day or two after the extraction, or it forms but breaks down for some reason. The result is called DRY SOCKET. This can be very painful and should be reported to your dentist. A dressing may be placed in the socket to protect it until the socket heals and to reduce any pains.

MEDICATIONS:

If your dentist has prescribed medicine to control pain and inflammation, or to prevent infection, use it only as directed. If the pain medication prescribed does not seem to work for you, do not take more pills or take them more often than directed—call our office.

CLEANING YOUR MOUTH:

Do not clean the teeth next to the healing tooth socket for the rest of the day. You should however brush and floss your other teeth well and begin cleaning the teeth next to the healing tooth socket the next day. You can also brush your tongue. This will help get rid of the bad breath and unpleasant taste that are common after an extraction.

The day after the extraction, gently rinse your mouth with warm salt water (half a teaspoon salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water) after meals to keep food particles out of the extraction site. Try not to rinse your mouth vigorously, as this may loosen the blood clot. If you have hypertension, discuss with your dentist whether you should rinse with salt water. Avoid using a mouthwash during this early healing period unless your dentist advises you to do so.

SWELLING AND PAIN:

After a tooth is removed, you may have some discomfort and notice some swelling. This is normal. Apply cold compresses to the skin overlying areas of swelling (cold water bottle, moist cold towels, and cold pack) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe those tender areas.

When to call the Dentist

If you have fever, nausea, vomiting, ongoing severe pain, swelling and bleeding, pain that worse overtime instead better.

EATING AND DRINKING:

After the extraction, drink lots of liquids and eat soft, nutritious foods. Avoid hot liquids and alcoholic beverages. Do not use a straw. Begin eating solid foods the next day or as soon as you can chew comfortably. For the first few days try to chew on the side opposite to extraction site. When it feels comfortable, you should resume chewing on both sides of your mouth.

FOLLOW UP:

Come back in 7 days for post op checkup.

SHARP EDGES:

If you feel sharp edges in the surgical areas with your tongue it is probably the bony walls which originally supported the teeth. Occasionally small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the first week or two after the surgery. They are not pieces of tooth and, if necessary, we will remove them. Please call our office if you are concerned.