

Postoperative Instructions for Tooth Extractions

Bleeding

The Doctor will place gauze on the extraction site to limit bleeding and confine the blood while clotting takes place. This gauze should be left in place for 30-45 minutes after you leave the office. There may be some bleeding or oozing after the pack is removed. If so follow this procedure:

Fold a piece of clean gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on. Dampen the pad and place it directly on the extraction site.

Apply moderate pressure by closing the teeth firmly over the pad for about 30 minutes.

If the pad becomes soaked, replace it with a clean one as necessary.

Do not suck on the extraction site.

A slight amount of blood may leak at the extraction site until a clot forms.

The Blood Clot

After an extraction, a blood clot forms in the tooth socket. This clot is an important part of the healing process. You should therefore avoid activities that might disturb the clot. Here's how to protect it:

DO NOT SMOKE, RINSE YOUR MOUTH VIGOROUSLY, OR DRINK THROUGH A STRAW FOR 24 HOURS. These activities create suction in the mouth, which could dislodge the clot and delay healing.

Do not clean the teeth next to the healing tooth socket for the rest of the day.

If you have sutures, your dentist will instruct you when to return to have them removed.

Medication

Your dentist may prescribe medication to control sensitivity and prevent infection. Use it as directed. **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN.** If you have prolonged swelling, bleeding, or fever, call your dentist immediately.

Swelling and Pain

Swelling is to be expected. Place an ice pack or cold moist cloth against the affected area. Put on for 5 minutes and off for 10 minutes for a least an hour.

Diet

After the extraction, drink lots of liquids and eat soft, nutritious foods. Avoid alcoholic beverages, carbonated beverages, and hot liquids. Begin eating solid foods the next day or as soon as you can chew comfortably on the opposite side of the extraction site.

Rinsing

THE DAY AFTER THE EXTRACTION, GENTLY RINSE YOUR MOUTH WITH WARM SALT WATER (half a teaspoon of salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water). Gently rinsing after meals is important to keep food particles out of the extraction site. Avoid using mouthwash during this early part of healing.

Oral Hygiene

It is important to continue to floss your teeth and brush thoroughly at least twice a day. The tongue should also be brushed. This will help eliminate the bad breath and unpleasant taste that is common after the extraction.