
Post-Op Instructions **Extractions**

During the first 24 hours

It is important that a blood clot forms on the extraction site to stop bleeding, reduce pain, and speed healing. To protect the clot and avoid the pain of dry socket, do the following:

- For 30 - 45 minutes after extraction, apply firm pressure to the area with a moistened gauze pad (change gauze as needed). If the extraction sight is still “oozing” after 30 minutes, use a moistened tea bag in place of the gauze. Slight bleeding is normal for up to 24 hours. If excessive bleeding occurs, please contact our office.
- After the procedure, and before the anesthesia wears off, start taking any medications recommended or prescribed. It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after an extraction.
- To avoid any possible swelling and/or bruising, apply an ice pack over the jaw (15 mins on and 15 mins off) for 1 hour. Ice in a washcloth or zip lock bag works well. Eat only soft, nourishing foods for the first 24-48 hours (e.g. milk, pureed vegetables, cream soups, gelatin, yogurt, pasta and/or eggs). Avoid eating hard crunchy foods in the extraction area, like nuts and chips, and foods with tiny seeds, like strawberries and raspberries, for the next 2 weeks.

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- Don't spit, suck on candies, or drink through a straw. Avoid smoking or use of tobacco for at least 72 hours. Don't drink alcohol, carbonated beverages, and/or hot drinks. Stay away from spicy and hot foods.
- Limit yourself to calm activities, and elevate your head with pillows when you lie down.
- Do not disturb the treated area with your tongue or toothbrush, and avoid flossing next to the site. You can still brush and floss all remaining teeth!

After the first 24 hours

- **Begin to eat normally** as soon as it's comfortable.
- **Resume brushing and flossing**, but clean gently around the site for about a week.
- **If antibiotics were prescribed**, continue to take them until finished, even if signs and symptoms are gone.
- **Reduce soreness or swelling** by applying moist heat, and taking any pain killers prescribed as needed.
- **Gently rinse your mouth** with warm salt water to increase healing speed. Use 1 tsp. of salt per 1 cup of warm water. Rinse 2 – 3 times a day for one week following the extraction.

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Follow these instructions carefully to ensure successful healing of your tooth extraction.

When to call us

It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a tooth extraction, but call us right away if you have:

- Heavy or increased bleeding.
- Pain or swelling that increases or continues beyond two to three days.
- A bad taste or odor in your mouth.
- A reaction to the medication.

Dry Socket

Watch for an uncomfortable condition called “dry socket”. This usually occurs within 48 hours after an extraction. The clot in the socket breaks down leaving an exposed surgical area, or a “dark hole”. Pain medication will not reduce the achy feeling that you experience with dry socket. The pain is not from an infection and will heal in 10 days. We can, however, make it feel better while it is healing. Please phone if you feel you have a dry socket.