

Home Care: Extractions

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

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:

- Bite on a gauze pad firmly for 30-60 minutes. Blood and saliva mix in the mouth and make it look like there is more bleeding than there really is. Some oozing is normal; however, after 1 hour, repeat with a clean gauze pad if oozing is profuse. The site could ooze for as long as 24 hours.
- Don't spit, and don't suck on candies or through a straw.
- Don't rinse your mouth, and don't brush or floss next to the site.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco. Avoid tobaccos for at least 72 hours because it slows healing.
- Don't sneeze or cough, so have sinus or allergy medication on hand if necessary.
- Limit yourself to calm activities and elevate your head with a pillow when you lie down to reduce bleeding.
- Don't drink hot, carbonated, or alcoholic drinks, and avoid hot or spicy foods.

To control discomfort: Take pain medication before the anesthetic has worn off or as recommended.

To keep swelling to a minimum: Use an ice bag over the area, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off.

When the numbness has worn off completely: Drink lots of fluids and eat only soft nutritious foods, chewing on the opposite sides.

After the first 24 hours:

- **Begin eating 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 for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.
- **Reduce soreness or swelling** by applying moist heat. Swelling usually starts to go down after 48 hours.
- Further reduce swelling by rinsing your mouth very gently with warm salt water. Use about one teaspoon of salt per glass of warm water. Rinse two to three times a day for the week following the 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 or three days
- A bad taste or odor in your mouth
- A reaction to the medication

We can be reached at 772.569.4118