



Post-Operative Instructions: Tooth Extraction

- After tooth extraction, it's important for a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. That's why we ask you to bite on a gauze pad for 30–45 minutes after the appointment. If the bleeding or oozing persists, insert another gauze pad and bite firmly for another 30 minutes. You may have to do this several times. If bleeding continues, a moist tea bag can be used for 30 minutes. If bleeding occurs, avoid hot liquids and exercise, and elevate your head.
- After the blood clot forms, it is important not to disturb or dislodge the clot as it aids healing. Do not rinse vigorously, suck on straws, smoke, drink alcohol, or aggressively brush teeth next to the extraction site for 5 days after surgery. These activities will dislodge or dissolve the clot and retard the healing process. Limit vigorous exercise for the first 3–5 days after surgery as this will increase blood pressure and may cause more bleeding from the extraction site.
- After the tooth is extracted, you may feel some pain and experience some swelling. An ice pack or an unopened bag of frozen peas or corn applied to the area will keep swelling to a minimum. Take pain medications as prescribed. The swelling usually subsides after 2–3 days.
- Use the pain medication as directed. Call the office if the medication doesn't seem to be working or if you experience unwanted side effects. If antibiotics are prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if signs and symptoms of infection are gone. Drink lots of fluids and eat nutritious soft food on the day of the extraction. You can eat normally as soon as you are comfortable.
- It is important to resume your normal dental routine after 24 hours. This should include brushing at least twice a day and flossing at least once daily. This will speed healing and help keep your mouth fresh and clean.
- After a few days, you will feel fine and can resume your normal activities. If you have heavy bleeding, severe pain, continued swelling beyond the normal 2–3 days, or a reaction to the medication, call the office immediately.
- If sutures (stitches) were placed, they are almost always the type that will dissolve and fall out within the first week or so after surgery. You will only have to have sutures removed if you were told that they must be removed and were scheduled for an appointment to remove them.