

# Tooth Extraction

## Post-Op Instructions

**DO NOT DISTURB THE AREA:** For the next few days, and especially the first 24 hours, it is very important to allow your body to form a good clot and start the healing process. Swishing, sucking through a straw, and smoking can all dislodge the clot and should be avoided for the next 24-48 hours. Prevent anything sharp from entering the wound (crunchy food, toothpicks, etc). Be sure to chew on the opposite side for the next 24 hours.

**BLEEDING:** When you leave the office, you might be biting on a piece of gauze to control the bleeding. Keep firm pressure on this gauze for the next 30 min. Do not change it during this time. The extraction site should be undisturbed so that a clot can form. After 30 min, you can remove the gauze. If the site is still bleeding, bite on another piece. If the bleeding has not slowed at all, you may try biting on a moistened tea bag. However, it should be noted that small amounts of blood can mix with saliva to give the appearance of pronounced bleeding. The site may ooze for 24, so it not uncommon to see a small amount of your pillow the morning after.

**SMOKING:** Smoking should be stopped following the extraction. Healing and success of the surgery will be substantially reduced by smoking within 48 hours after the procedure. Also, the suction created when inhaling on a cigarette can dislodge the clot and cause a greater risk for a painful dry socket.

**PAIN:** Some discomfort is normal after an extraction. To minimize pain, 800 mg of motrin/ibuprofen is recommended every 6 hours following the procedure. It is best to take the pain reliever before the anesthesia wears off. If pain medication has been prescribed, take it only as instructed on the label. Taking with soft food or milk can help reduce nausea or an upset stomach. *You should not drive or operate heavy machinery while under the influence of prescription pain medication.* Also, if given a prescription, no OTC pain medication should be taken unless instructed to do so by the doctor.

**NAUSEA:** This is most often caused by taking pain medication on an empty stomach. Reduce this by preceding each pill with soft food. Also remember to drink plenty of water.

**SWELLING:** Applying an ice bag to the face over the area will minimize swelling. Apply for 15 minutes, then remove for 15 minutes. Continue this as needed the remainder of the day.

**NUMBNESS:** The local anesthesia will cause the area to remain numb for a couple hours after you leave the office. Be very careful not to bite, chew, pinch, or scratch the numb area. In some rare cases, the extraction can produce residual numbness or a tingling sensation for six weeks or longer.

**BRUSHING:** Do not brush your teeth for the first 8 hours after surgery. After this, you may gently bursh your teeth being careful to avoid the extraction site for the next 3 days.

**RINSING:** Avoid rinsing or swishing for the next 24 hours. Rinsing can disturb to clot formation and increase the risk of bleeding and/or dry socket. After 24 hours, you may begin gently rinsing with a saltwater solution (1/2 tsp. salt + 1/2 tsp. baking soda + 8 oz. warm water). Avoid commercial mouth rinses as they tend to have alcohol in them which will delay healing.

**DIET:** Eat soft foods for the first two days. Avoid hot, crunchy, and spicy foods. Avoid alcohol for 48 hours. Drink plenty of water.

**ACTIVITY:** After leaving the office, rest and avoid strenuous activities for the remainder of the day.

**ANTIBIOTICS:** If you were given an antibiotic prescription, take all of them as directed until they are gone. Women should be aware that antibiotics can reduce the effectiveness of birth control pills.

**SINUS:** If your sinus was involved in the procedure, you should avoid blowing your nose or playing a wind musical instrument for one week after the procedure. Use of a decongestant medication might also be recommended.

**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:** You may need to return to the office following the procedure for suture removal, or just for a brief examination to check healing.

### Please call the dentist, or seek medical attention, if you have:

- *Uncontrollable Pain*
- *Excessive or Severe Bleeding*
- *Marked Fever*
- *Excessive Swelling Occurring a Few Days After the Procedure*
- *Reactions to Medications; Especially a Rash, Itching, or Breathing Problems*

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