

EXTRACTIONS POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

Blood Clot Formation—The Key to Proper Healing

After a tooth is extracted, it's important for a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process.

- We will have you bite on a gauze pad for 30-45 minutes after your procedure.
- If the bleeding or oozing still persists, place another gauze pad and bite firmly for another 30 minutes. You may have to do this several times.
- After the blood clot forms, it's *extremely important* not to disturb or dislodge the clot because of its critical role in the healing process.

What Not to Do!

Specific activities will dislodge or dissolve the clot, impede the healing process, and possibly cause a *wickedly painful condition* known as “dry socket” (see below).

- Do not rinse vigorously.
- Do not suck on straws.
- Do not smoke for 72 hours.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not brush ON the extraction site, but DO brush all of your other teeth around it!
- Do not exercise vigorously for the next 24 hours.

Dry Socket

Without the protection of a blood clot, the bone and nerve endings in your extraction site become exposed to air, food, and liquids. The resulting “dry socket” is very painful and delays the healing process.

If you suspect you have a dry socket, please call our office.

Following the instructions we outlined above will minimize your chances of getting this painful condition.

Pain and Swelling

Some pain and swelling is normal following an extraction.

- Use the pain medication regimen we've given you, whether prescription or over-the-counter, as directed. Call our office if the medication doesn't seem to be working for you.
- If we prescribed antibiotics for you, continue taking them for the entire prescribed length of time, even if signs and symptoms of infection are gone.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious soft food on the day of the extraction. You can eat normally as soon as you are comfortable.
- Resume your normal dental routine after 24 hours. This includes brushing your teeth twice a day and flossing once a day—with the exception of the teeth next to your extraction site, as stated above—to help speed up your healing process and keep your mouth fresh and clean.
- Your bleeding should be mostly stopped by the time you get home. Your first day following the extraction, however, you may notice some blood when you rinse that looks bright pink. This is normal.

When to Call Our Office

If you experience any of the following, call our office immediately:

- Heavy bleeding
- Severe pain
- Continued swelling for 2-3 days
- A reaction to the medication we've prescribed

Carefully following our post-extraction instructions is critical to your speedy and complete recovery. After a few days, you should feel fine and be able to resume your normal activities.