



## Post-Operative Instructions Following Dental Surgery

Follow these instructions carefully to ensure the 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 or three days
- A bad taste or odor in your mouth
- A reaction to the medication

### 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 a 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 tobacco for at least 72 hours because it slows the healing process.
- Limit yourself to calm activities and elevate your head with pillows 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 side.

**If you have received sutures**, avoid playing with them. Sutures will dissolve 5-10 days after surgery.

### 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 for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

**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 a week following the extraction.

### DIET

**Soft foods** (i.e., smoothies, protein shakes, mashed potatoes, jello, milkshakes) for the first 24 hours.

Beginning tomorrow you can increase your diet variety to anything that can be cut with a fork. When you feel comfortable to resume a normal diet, avoid chewing food into the surgical area.