

Smile Solutions

Extraction Care Instructions

Medication

Your dentist may prescribe medication to control pain and prevent infection. Use it only as directed. If the medication prescribed does not seem to work for you, do not increase the dosage. If you have prolonged or severe pain, swelling, bleeding, or fever, call your dentist immediately.

Bleeding

Your dentist will place a gauze pack on the extraction site to limit bleeding and confine the blood while clotting takes place. This gauze pack should be left in place for 30 to 45 minutes after you leave the dentist's office. Do not chew on the pack. There may be some bleeding or oozing after the pack is removed.

If so, follow this procedure: **Fold a piece of clean gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on, this is about 2 pieces of gauze folded. Dampen the pad and place it directly on the extraction site. Apply moderate pressure by closing the teeth firmly over the pad. Maintain this pressure for about 30 minutes. If the pad becomes soaked, replace it with a clean one as necessary. Do not suck on the extraction site!**

A slight amount of blood may leak at the extraction site until a clot forms. However, if heavy bleeding continues, call your dentist. (Remember, though, that a lot of saliva and a little blood can look like a lot of bleeding.)

Swelling and Pain

After a tooth is removed, you may have some discomfort and notice some swelling. You can help reduce swelling and pain by applying cold compresses to the face. An ice bag or cold and moist cloths can be used periodically. Do not leave the compress in place for hours. Generally 15-20 minutes using the cold compress with a break of 15-20 minutes with them off is the best way to gain relief. Continue doing this routine all day the day you have surgery.

Diet

After the extraction, drink lots of liquids and eat soft, nutritious foods. Avoid alcoholic beverages and hot liquids. Also avoid chips, crunchy foods, and foods that can leave seeds or large pieces that can easily lodge in the extraction site. Begin eating solid foods the next day or as soon as you can chew comfortably. For about two days, try to chew food on the side opposite the extraction site. If you are troubled by nausea and vomiting, call your dentist for advice.

Anesthetics

The length of time you experience numbness varies, depending on the type of anesthetic you've received. While your mouth is numb, you'll want to be careful not to bite your cheek, lips, or tongue. The numbness should subside within a few hours.

The Blood Clot

After an extraction, a blood clot forms in the tooth socket. This clot is an important part of the normal healing process. You should therefore avoid activities that might disturb the clot.

Here's how to protect it: **Do Not Smoke. Also, do not rinse your mouth vigorously or drink through a straw for 24 hours.** These activities create suction in the mouth, which could dislodge or dissolve the clot and delay healing.

Do not clean the teeth next to the healing tooth socket for the rest of the day. You should, however, brush and floss your other teeth thoroughly. Gently rinse your mouth afterward. **Limit strenuous activity for 24 hours after the extraction.** This will reduce bleeding and help the blood clot to form. If you have sutures, your dentist will instruct you when to return to have them removed. This will usually be about 1 week after the extraction.

Rinsing

The day of the extraction, do not spit aggressively, instead lift the excess saliva and etc. onto your tongue and wipe off with a tissue. 24 hours after the extraction has been done, gently rinse your mouth with warm salt water (half a teaspoon of salt in an 8oz. glass of warm water). Remember not to rinse your mouth vigorously. Avoid using a mouth rinse or mouthwash during this early healing period.

Oral Hygiene

It is important to continue to floss your teeth and brush thoroughly at least twice a day using an ADA accepted fluoride toothpaste. The tongue should also be brushed. This will help eliminate the bad breath and unpleasant taste that is common after an extraction. Always use a soft-bristled toothbrush so that you do not injure the tissues in your mouth. Following extraction, avoid cleaning the teeth next to the healing tooth socket for one day.