

## *Post Treatment Instructions for Extractions*

**The following are general instructions for care following tooth extraction. Please rely on the specific instructions given by your doctor.**

1. **Bleeding:** Some bleeding is expected following an extraction. Place gauze over the socket and apply firm pressure by closing the teeth together. This pressure can also be applied by applying pressure on the gauze with your fingers. Allow the gauze to remain in place undisturbed for 20 minutes. Remove the gauze pack. If there is a small amount of blood on the gauze there is no need to replace it. Reinsert the gauze only if it is saturated in bright red blood. Repeat if necessary. **Avoid using a straw**, forcibly spitting, and anything else that creates suction or pressure in your mouth. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for 30 minutes. If bleeding remains excessive, call the office.
2. **Activity:** Remain quiet and keep your head elevated until retiring. Avoid any strenuous physical activity for at least 24 hours.
3. **Pain:** Some pain is normal following a tooth extraction. Take prescription or over the counter pain medications as prescribed by your doctor. **Do not take any over the counter pain medications that contain aspirin as the aspirin will cause bleeding to continue.** If you were prescribed narcotic prescription pain medication, do not drive a car or operate dangerous machinery while taking these medications. Do not take these medications on an empty stomach unless the directions specifically state to do so. Call the office if pain seems excessive and is not reasonably controlled by the medications.
4. **Swelling and bruising:** For a single extraction, apply an ice bag or chopped ice wrapped in a towel to the area for 10 minutes and then off 10 minutes for 4 hours. For multiple or wisdom tooth extractions, continue for 24 hours. Do not be alarmed by bruising or discoloration of the face after extractions. It is normal.
5. **Diet:** A liquid or soft diet is advisable for at least the first 24 hours following extractions. **Avoid** hard, crunchy foods such as peanuts, potato chips, etc. for several days and until you can chew them comfortably. Also **avoid** foods that have kernels and seeds like popcorn and sunflower seeds. These seeds or particles may become lodged in the extraction site. **Avoid using a straw for one week.** It is very important that you do eat or drink something nutritional every 3 to 4 hours following the extraction. Your body needs the nutrition to help it heal and maintain blood sugar levels, and taking medications on an empty stomach may lead to nausea and increased side effects.
6. **Mouth Rinse:** Do not rinse your mouth for the first 24 hours following extractions. After 24 hours, a warm saltwater rinse made by dissolving a teaspoon of table salt in a tall glass of warm water

can be used to sooth the extraction area and aid healing. Do not use commercial mouthwashes (Listerine, Scope, etc.). They contain alcohol and interfere with healing. When using rinses, do not spit forcibly to remove them from your mouth. Lean over the sink and let them flow out.

7. **Oral Hygiene:** It is important to keep your mouth clean in order to aid healing. Brush and floss as in usual areas of your mouth where there was no treatment. In the area where the tooth was removed, gently brush and floss the teeth in the area near the socket.
8. **Smoking and alcohol:** Do not smoke or drink alcohol for at least one week following an extraction. This can cause serious complications.
9. **Dry lips:** Apply Vaseline or any bland lip ointment 3 times daily.
10. **Medications:** Take all medications as they are prescribed and do not take them on an empty stomach. Taking them on an empty stomach can increase side effects and cause nausea.
11. **Sutures:** Your doctor will advise you if you will need to return for suture removal. Please do not disturb them. They are placed to control bleeding and to aid in healing.
12. **Healing:** Do not disturb the area of the socket by touching it with fingers, toothpicks, or your tongue. The blood clot which forms over the area is nature's method of healing and should not be disturbed. Disturbing the clot can delay healing and dislodge the clot. This results in a complication called a "dry socket" which means the loss of the blood clot from the socket. Dry sockets normally occur within the first week after the extraction and are characterized by a sudden increase in pain and throbbing. Dry sockets do not normally improve without your doctor's care. If you notice a sudden increase in pain and throbbing, contact the office for an appointment to see your doctor.
13. **Bony Edges:** Small sharp bone fragments may work through the gums during the healing process. These are not roots. Most will come out on their own, but if they annoy you, call the office to discuss removal.
14. **IV Sedation/Conscious Sedation:** If IV sedation/conscious sedation was administered, do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours as these medications remain in your system. It is advisable that someone remains with you throughout the day.
15. **Dentures:** If dentures were placed at the time of the surgery (immediate dentures), remove dentures after 24 hours. Rinse mouth and dentures with cold water and salt water. You should see your general dentist within 24-48 hours of surgery.