

Postoperative Instructions: Tooth Extraction

DO NOT DISTURB THE AREA: During the next few days, and especially the first 24 hours, it is important to allow your body to form a good clot and begin the natural healing process. Shaking, sucking on a straw, and smoking can dislodge the clot. Avoid getting anything sharp into the wound (crunchy foods, toothpicks, eating utensils). Be sure to chew on the opposite side for 24 hours.

BLEEDING: When you leave the office, you may be biting down on a gauze pad to control bleeding. Keep light pressure on this gauze for at least 30 minutes. Do not change it during this time; it should remain unchanged while a clot forms in the extraction socket. After 30 minutes you can remove it. You can bite on another gauze pad or tea bag for another 30 minutes if you feel you are still bleeding. Small amounts of blood in the saliva can make your saliva appear quite red. This is normal and can be noticed for the rest of the day after the procedure.

SMOKING: Smoking should be stopped after surgery. The healing and success of the surgery will be substantially reduced by the chemicals in your body from cigarette smoke. Also, the suction created by inhaling cigarettes can dislodge the clot. Smokers are at increased risk of developing painful dry sockets.

PAIN: Some discomfort is normal after surgery. To minimize pain, take two non-aspirin pain relievers Tylenol, Nuprin, Advil, or similar every 3 to 4 hours until bedtime to maintain comfort. Take it before the anesthesia wears off.

SWELLING: Applying an ice pack to the face over the operated area will minimize swelling. Apply for 15 minutes, then remove for 15 minutes. Continue this for the first day.

NUMBNESS: The local anesthetic will make you numb for several hours after leaving the office. Be very careful not to bite, chew, pinch, or scratch the numb area. Sometimes the removal causes residual numbness or tingling for six weeks or more.

BRUSHING: Do not brush your teeth for the first 8 hours after surgery. After this, you can brush your teeth gently. But avoid the surgery area for 3 days.