

TOOTH EXTRACTION POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

Recovery after dental surgery is eased by rest, food and water consumption, medication, and good oral hygiene.

Shortly after dental surgery the anesthetic will begin to wear off. Before this happens, it is important to take oral pain medications. Timely pain control will help you to rest. To help minimize swelling keep your head elevated and lower your activity level. Using ice packs as often as comfortably possible during the first days after surgery can minimize facial swelling.

We recommend that you not fast after dental surgery. Pain medications and antibiotics can upset an empty stomach. You may wish to eat soft foods at first. High protein foods are beneficial to healing. Be sure to drink plenty of water.

For surgical sites to heal properly, oral hygiene should not be neglected. Brush your teeth as normal, but avoid tooth extraction or implant sites. Do not brush sutures. Antibiotic rinses and saltwater rinses are helpful. Do not rinse with alcohol or peroxyl rinses while healing.

A pink tinge in saliva during the first days after surgery is normal. When bleeding has stopped, a blood clot has developed. This blood clot is an important part of the healing process. If the clot does not form, or gets dislodged, you may develop a condition called dry socket. Dry socket occurs when the surgical site is exposed to air causing pain and potential infection. Certain medical conditions increase the chances of dry socket. There are treatments for dry socket. Should you find that pain is increasing in the days after surgery, rather than decreasing, you should call for an additional post-op appointment.

If prescribed, take the full course of antibiotic medication to ensure proper healing.

Use pain medication as needed.

NEVER USE HEAT PACKS FOLLOWING AN EXTRACTION. Heat will cause increased blood flow to the area, which will cause bruising, swelling, and pain.

If you experience prolonged bleeding, fold a piece of clean gauze to create a thick pad, dampen with water, and bite down firmly until the bleeding stops. You can also place a wet tea bag on the extraction site and bite firmly. Tea (especially black tea) has tannins which help with the clotting process.

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF DRY SOCKET

Smoking and vaping

Nicotine is a vasoconstrictor, which inhibits blood flow in the gingival tissues. If there is not proper blood flow, the clot will not form properly, and you may develop dry socket.

Alcohol

Avoid alcoholic beverages and mouth rinses that contain alcohol for a few days after surgery as they can interfere with blood clot formation and healing.

Sucking on straw

Sucking on a straw or cheeks can cause pressure change in your mouth which can dislodge the blood clot from the extraction site.

Trauma

Be careful not to brush the area or eat any foods (corn chips, etc.) that could traumatize or dislodge the blood clot in the extraction site.

Vigorous swishing

Vigorous swishing can also cause extreme pressure change in your mouth and can potentially dislodge the blood clot.

Heavy lifting and strenuous activity

Any heavy lifting or strenuous activity will raise your blood pressure, which could cause the extraction site to start bleeding again.