

## **Instructions for homecare following a tooth extraction:**



- The initial healing period takes one to two weeks, and you'll likely experience some swelling for the first 48 hours.
- Bite lightly on gauze for 1 hour, then discard.
- Before the procedure began, you were given an anesthetic to ensure your comfort. This anesthetic typically leaves your lips, teeth and tongue feeling numb after the appointment. For this reason, you should avoid chewing for 2 hours following surgery, or until the numbness has completely worn off.
- Some discomfort after the extraction is normal. An over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen, or acetaminophen, is usually sufficient. We can also give you a prescription for a stronger pain reliever if needed.
- To avoid nausea; do not take pain medication on an empty stomach.
- You can also decrease pain and swelling by applying an ice pack-20 minutes on, 20 minutes off-for the first 6 hours following the extraction.
- A blood clot will form on the extraction site, and this clot is vital to the healing process. To keep the clot intact, avoid touching the extraction site with your tongue or fingers, do not drink liquids through a straw, and do not spit.
- Blowing your nose or sneezing violently can dislodge the blood clot and impair healing, so if you have an upper respiratory infection or suffer from allergies, be sure to have the appropriate sinus medication on hand.
- Do not rinse your mouth the day of the surgery.
- Smoking and allowing food particles to pack into the tooth's socket should be avoided, as both will significantly affect the healing process.
- Twenty-four hours following the procedure, you can rinse gently with mouthwash or a warm salt water solution (dissolve one teaspoon of salt with one cup of warm water); gently swish the solution around the affected area, and spit carefully. You should do this 2-3 times each day for a week following the extraction.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.
- Relax as much as possible and avoid all strenuous activities for the first 24 hours following surgery.
- Once the numbness has worn off, you should eat, as nourishment is important to the healing process. Do not have anything hot to eat or drink within the first 24 hours; room temperature or cold only. Limit your diet to soft foods like yogurt, soft soups, ice cream, or soft-cooked eggs for the first 48 hours.
- Keep your head elevated with pillows to control bleeding. If bleeding persists, you can also bite gently but firmly on a moist tea bag for 20 minutes. Call our office if bleeding continues or increases.
- Be sure to brush and floss the other areas of your mouth as you would normally.
- The space left by the tooth will feel a bit strange at first. Eventually, new bone and gum tissue will grow into the gap left by the extraction.