

Patient Instructions-Extractions

Follow these instructions carefully to ensure the successful healing of your tooth extraction.

Before the procedure

Schedule some time off, so you can take it easy for several days after your tooth extraction.

If you are a woman taking birth control pills, schedule your appointment during the last week of your cycle.

Arrange to have a friend or family member drive you home.

We may recommend that you take an anti-inflammatory medication before your appointment.

When to call us

It's normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a tooth extraction, but call us right away if you have:

- Heavy or increased bleeding
- Pain or swelling that increases or continues beyond 2 or 3 days
- A bad taste or odor in your mouth
- A reaction to the medication

During the first 24 hours

It's important that a blood clot forms on the extraction site to stop bleeding, reduce pain, and speed healing. To protect the clot and avoid the pain of a dry socket:

- Bite on a gauze pad firmly for 45 to 60 minutes. If bleeding or oozing continues, bite down on a clean pad or moist tea bag for 45 to 60 minutes.
- Don't spit, suck through a straw, or hard candies.
- Don't rinse your mouth, and don't brush or floss next to the site.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco. Avoid tobacco for at least 72 hours because it slows healing.
- Limit yourself to calm activities and elevate your head with pillows when you lie down to reduce bleeding.
- Don't drink hot, carbonated, or alcoholic drinks, and avoid hot or spicy food.

To control discomfort, take pain medication before the numbness has worn off or as recommended.

To keep swelling down, use an ice bag over the area, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off.

When the numbness has worn off completely, drink lots of fluids and eat only soft nutritious foods, chewing on the opposite side.

After the first 24 hours

Begin to eat normally as soon as it's comfortable.

Resume brushing and flossing, but clean gently around the site for about a week.

If antibiotics were prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

Further reduce swelling by rinsing your mouth very gently with warm salt water. Use about one teaspoon of salt per glass of warm water. Rinse 2 to 3 times a day for the week following the extraction.