

Care of Mouth After Extractions

Bleeding

We will place a gauze pack on the extraction site to limit bleeding and confine the blood while clotting takes place. This gauze pack should be left in place for 30 to 45 minutes after you leave the office. There may be some bleeding or oozing after the pack is removed. If so, follow this procedure:

- Fold a piece of clean gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on. Dampen the pad with clean, warm water and place it directly on the extraction site.
- Apply moderate pressure by closing the teeth firmly over the pad. Maintain this pressure for about 30 minutes. If the pad becomes soaked with blood, replace it with a clean one as necessary.
- Do not suck on the extraction site or disturb it with your tongue.
- A slight amount of blood may leak from the extraction site until a clot forms. However, if heavy bleeding continues, call the office. (Remember, though, that a little bit of blood mixed with a lot of saliva can look like a lot of bleeding.)

The Blood Clot

After a tooth extraction, a blood clot forms in the tooth socket. This clot is an important part of the normal healing process. You should avoid activities that might disturb the clot. Here's how to protect it:

- Do not rinse your mouth vigorously, or drink through a straw for 24 hours. These activities create suction in the mouth, which could dislodge the clot and delay healing.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages or mouthwash containing alcohol for 24 hours.
- Do not clean the teeth next to the healing tooth socket for the rest of the day. You should, however, brush and floss your other teeth thoroughly. Gently rinse your mouth afterward.
- Limit strenuous activity for 24 hours after the extraction. This will reduce bleeding and help the blood clot to form.

Swelling and Pain

After a tooth extraction, your child may have some discomfort and notice some swelling. You can help reduce swelling and pain by applying cold compresses to your face. An ice bag or cold, moist cloth can be used periodically. **If your child has prolonged or severe pain, swelling, bleeding, fever, nausea or vomiting, call our office immediately.**

Diet

After the tooth extraction, drink lots of liquids and eat soft, nutritious foods. Avoid hot liquids and alcoholic beverages. Do not use a straw. Begin eating solid foods the next day or as soon as you can chew comfortably. For the first few days, try to chew food on the side opposite the extraction site. When it feels comfortable, you could resume chewing on both sides of your mouth.

Cleaning Your Mouth

Do not clean the teeth next to the healing tooth socket for the rest of the day. You should, however, brush and floss your other teeth thoroughly, and begin cleaning the teeth next to the healing tooth socket the next day. The tongue should also be brushed. This will help eliminate the bad breath and unpleasant taste that are common after an extraction.

The day after the extraction, gently rinse your mouth with warm salt water (half a teaspoon salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water) after meals to keep food particles out of the extraction site. But remember not to rinse your mouth vigorously, as this may dislodge the blood clot.

When choosing oral hygiene products, look for those that carry the American Dental Association's Seal of Acceptance – a sign that a product has met ADA criteria for safety and effectiveness.