

# Post-Op Instructions **Extractions**

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

## When to call us

It is 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 two or three days
- ❖ A bad taste or odor in your mouth
- ❖ A reaction to the medication



Rinse with warm salt water



Lie down with your head elevated

## During the first 24 hours

**It is 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 dry socket:

- ❖ Bite on a gauze pad firmly for 30-60 minutes. Blood and saliva mix in the mouth and make it look like there is more bleeding than there really is. Some oozing is normal; however, after 1 hour, repeat with a clean gauze pad if oozing is profuse. The site could ooze for as long as 24 hours.
- ❖ Don't spit, and don't suck on candies or through a straw.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Don't sneeze or cough, so have sinus or allergy medication on hand if necessary.
- ❖ 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 foods.

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



Discussing post-op instructions

**To keep swelling to a minimum**, 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.

**Reduce soreness or swelling** by applying moist heat. Swelling usually starts to go down after 48 hours.

**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 two to three times a day for the week following the extraction.