

# Post-operative instructions Following tooth extraction



## Immediately following surgery

- ✓ Bite on the gauze (placed over surgical site) with firm pressure for 30 minutes. If still bleeding, repeat with clean gauze.
- ✓ Take recommended pain medication before the freezing wears off. Ideally within one hour of leaving our office.
- ✓ Rest the day of surgery. No working out.
- ✓ Do not suck from a straw or spit. Avoid blowing your nose while plugging both nostrils (keep one nostril open). A negative pressure will dislodge the clot.
- ✓ Refrain from smoking for 48 hours.
- ✓ No rinsing.

## Diet

- ✓ We recommend a liquid and soft food diet for the first few days after surgery. Some suggestions are: yogurt, cottage cheese, oatmeal, and scrambled eggs.
- ✓ Avoid hot foods on the first day, as it will increase the bleeding.
- ✓ Drink lots of liquids, keep hydrated.

## Bleeding

- ✓ Bleeding is controlled by the use of pressure. Bite on the gauze for 30 minute intervals. If bleeding has not decreased in 3 hours, bite onto a dampened tea bag placed over the surgical site. The [tannin](#) in the tea helps the blood to clot.
- ✓ Cover your pillowcase with an old towel for the first few nights.
- ✓ Bleeding will slowly subside in the first two days.

## Swelling

- ✓ Some swelling is to be expected. The degree of swelling cannot be predicted, since each individual swells to a different degree.
- ✓ Swelling peaks 72 hours following the extraction.
- ✓ Icing the area with ice/frozen peas is beneficial during the first day. After this, icing has little effect on the amount of swelling. We recommend doing it for 20 minutes, followed by a 20 minute rest. Repeat as necessary.

### Pain

- ✓ Pain peaks in the first 24 hours following surgery. Pain management is very important during this time. Take something for the pain before the freezing wears off (within the first hour of leaving our office). Repeat as needed.
- ✓ Sometimes the pain will wake you up during your sleep. You can prevent this by setting your alarm, and taking your next dose at your pain killer's recommended time frame.
- ✓ Anti-inflammatories (Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen) work best for post-operative pain. For moderate pain, take 400-800mg every 4-to-6 hours.
- ✓ For severe pain, take the prescribed medication as directed.
- ✓ Do not drive an automobile or operate machinery.
- ✓ Avoid alcohol.

### Cleaning

- ✓ Avoid cleaning the surgical area for the first day.
- ✓ On the second day, begin with gentle rinses with warm salt water (1 tsp of salt in a glass of water). This is a natural antibacterial rinse which will promote healing.
- ✓ Start brushing your teeth as normal on the second day. Do not brush the surgical site for about 3 days.

### Dry Socket

- ✓ A "[dry socket](#)" is the loss of the blood clot in the socket. This is not an infection. This condition creates a delayed healing at the extraction site, and presents symptoms such as pain in the ear, chin, adjacent teeth, and jaw.
- ✓ The pain begins about the third or fourth day following surgery, and can last many days.
- ✓ The cause of a dry socket is unknown, but can be attributed to the difficulty of surgery, medications (such as birth control pills), and smoking. Females are at greater risk.
- ✓ Treatment is for the symptoms only.

If you have any concerns or questions, do not hesitate to contact us.