

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

Extraction wounds usually heal quickly and without complications if you take simple precautions. A blood clot must form in the tooth socket for the area to heal. Therefore, it is important to avoid activities that will disturb the clot.

- Don't create suction in your mouth: don't smoke or rinse your mouth vigorously or drink through a straw for the rest of the day.
- Reduce your activity as much as possible for 24 hours after an extraction.

### **Rinsing the Mouth**

For 24 hours after an extraction, do not rinse your mouth vigorously or clean the teeth next to the site. The blood clot must not be disturbed!

After the first day, rinse very gently after meals with warm salt water (½ teaspoon salt in a glass of warm water). This keeps food particles out of the surgery site.

While you shouldn't rinse your mouth vigorously for at least a day, it is important to clean your teeth. Therefore, continue to brush and floss at least once a day. This will help the wound to heal and to resist infection. It will also eliminate the bad breath and taste that is common after an extraction. Brushing the tongue will help remove blood and freshen your mouth.

### **What to Eat**

Avoid alcoholic beverages and hot liquids for the first day. Other than this, eat nutritious foods as often as you can to help the healing process. Drink lots of liquids and eat soft foods for a day. After a day you may take solid foods as soon as you can chew comfortably. Protein foods (such as meat or eggs) and fruit juices (with their vitamin c) are especially good.

### **Bleeding**

The extraction wound may bleed a little for a couple of hours. Even a day later, the area may ooze a bit. To help control bleeding, follow this procedure:

- Fold a piece of clean gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on and place it directly on the bleeding spot.
- Close the teeth firmly over this pad so that there is pressure again on the bleeding spot. Don't chew on it.
- Maintain this pressure for about 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary.
- You may want to spit out the saliva once in a while, but don't suck on the extraction site. (Remember: A lot of saliva and a little blood may look like a lot of bleeding.)
- If heavy bleeding persists, call your dentist.

### What to do for Swelling or Pain

Some swelling may occur. Don't be concerned about it. You may also be uncomfortable for a while after the anesthetic wears off. You can prevent both the swelling and pain by applying cold to the affected side of the face immediately after an extraction. Use an ice bag or cold moist cloth for about 15 minutes of every hour for several hours after the extraction. Your dentist may provide a plastic bag of ice to use on your way home from the office.

Before you take any medications to relieve pain, check with your dentist. If you have prolonged or severe pain, swelling, bleeding or a fever call your dentist immediately so that exact instructions for care may be given.

Remember that you have just had an operation. Be kind to yourself.

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