



## Post-Operative Instructions for Extractions

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, 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
- Try not to sneeze or cough
- 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. Avoid hot or spicy foods as well

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

**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 1 tsp of salt per glass of warm water. Rinse two to three times a day the following week after your extraction.