

Post-Operative Instructions: Extractions

After tooth extraction, it's important to allow a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. That's why we ask you to bite on a gauze pad for 45 minutes after the appointment. If the bleeding or oozing persists, insert another gauze pad and bite firmly for another 30 minutes. You may have to do this several times.

- Do not rinse or spit for 24 hours after surgery.
- Keep your fingers and tongue away from the socket or surgical area.
- Use ice packs on the surgical area (side of face) for the first 48 hours; apply ice 20 minutes on and 10 minutes off. (Frozen Veggies work great too!)
- For mild discomfort, take acetaminophen or ibuprofen every 3–4 hours (not aspirin).
- For severe pain, use the medication prescribed to you.
- Drink plenty of fluids. (Do not use a straw—this creates suction in the mouth that may cause complications.)
- We recommend not smoking for at least 5 days after surgery.
- Avoid strenuous activity and do not exercise for at least 3–4 days after surgery. After that, be careful: your regular caloric and fluid intake have been reduced, so you may get light-headed, dizzy, or weak. 24 hours of bed rest is recommended after extensive oral surgery.
- If the muscles of the jaw become stiff, a hot washcloth on the outside of your face over the area will help relax those muscles.
- After the first post-operative day, use a warm salt water rinse approximately every 4 hours, especially following meals, for the first week after surgery. (Mix ½ teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water. Mouthwash can be added to improve taste.)
- Your diet should consist mainly of soft, easily swallowed foods and cool drinks while healing. Avoid anything that might get stuck in your teeth (no seeds, nuts, rice, popcorn, or similar foods).

Remember: Family Dentistry does not have after-hours emergency service. If you experience a medical emergency, please contact your nearest medical center immediately.