

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

You've just had a tooth (teeth) extracted. It is very important to heed the following post-operative instructions in order for your healing to proceed as smoothly and with as few complications as possible.

There is a blood clot forming in the socket(s) where your tooth (teeth) used to be. This is the first step in the healing process where bone will eventually fill in the healing socket.

Make sure to keep pressure on the gauze in your mouth for the next hour so that the blood can start coagulating (clotting). An extra packet of gauze has been provided for you in case you need to replace the gauze after 1 hour. For the next few days, it is extremely important to avoid creating a negative pressure environment in your mouth since it will dislodge the healing blood clot and result in what we call a dry socket. A dry socket is painful and will need immediate attention in the form of a surgical dressing to be replaced every 3 days. You can avoid a painful dry socket by:

1. Not sucking through a straw.
2. Not smoking.
3. Not spitting, but rather let your saliva drip out of the other corner of your mouth.

Also, it is important to:

1. Not drink any alcoholic beverages.
2. Eat soft foods and avoid any hard foods in the area where the extraction was done.

Starting 24 hours after the extraction, you should rinse with warm salt water several times a day (a cup of warm water with a teaspoon of salt). This should help increase your blood circulation in the area and help expedite the healing.

Unless otherwise directed by your dentist, you do not require any pain medication stronger than the usual over the counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (Advil, Motrin) or Tylenol. In many cases, no pain medications are required at all, as long as the above mentioned instructions are followed. Antibiotics are not needed after an extraction unless otherwise directed by your dentist.