



Tooth Extraction Post-Operative Instructions

Following these instructions carefully will help promote proper healing and reduce the risk of complications.

Anesthetic

The duration of numbness varies depending on the type and amount of anesthetic used and the area treated. While numb, **do not eat foods that require chewing**, as you may accidentally bite your lip, cheek, or tongue.

If consuming liquids, **do not use a straw**, as the sucking action may disturb the blood clot. Numbness typically subsides within a few hours. Contact your dentist if it persists longer than expected.

Bleeding

A gauze pack may be placed over the extraction site. Keep it in place for **30–45 minutes** after leaving the office. Do not chew on the gauze.

Some mild bleeding or oozing is normal after the gauze is removed. If bleeding continues:

- Fold clean gauze into a thick pad, lightly moisten it with clean water, and place it directly over the extraction site.
- Bite down firmly with moderate, steady pressure for approximately **30 minutes**.
- Replace the gauze with a clean pad if it becomes saturated.
- Do not suck on, touch, or disturb the extraction site with your tongue.

A small amount of blood mixed with saliva can appear to be significant. If needed, place an old towel or pillowcase over your pillow while sleeping.

For additional bleeding control, a **moistened (Lipton) tea bag** may be placed over the site and held with gentle pressure for **10–15 minutes**.

If heavy bleeding continues despite these measures, contact your dentist.

Protecting the Blood Clot

A blood clot forms in the extraction socket and is essential for proper healing. Protect the clot by following these precautions for the first **24 hours**:

- Do not smoke.
- Do not rinse vigorously.
- Do not use a straw.



- Avoid alcoholic beverages and alcohol-containing mouthwash.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity.
- Keep your head elevated above your heart for **24–48 hours** to help minimize bleeding.

If the blood clot does not form or become dislodged, a **dry socket (osteitis)** may develop. This can cause significant pain and should be reported to your dentist. A medicated dressing may be placed to protect the area and relieve discomfort.

Medication

Take all prescribed medications exactly as directed. **Do not increase the dose or take medication more frequently** if your pain is not adequately controlled. Contact your dentist if you experience difficulty with any medication or if it does not adequately relieve your discomfort.

Swelling and Pain

Some discomfort and swelling are normal following an extraction. Use a cold compress or ice pack on the outside of your face as directed by your dentist.

Post-operative discomfort may **increase around 48 hours** after treatment before beginning to improve.

Contact your dentist immediately if you experience **severe or prolonged pain, significant swelling, persistent bleeding, fever, nausea, or vomiting**. If you cannot reach your dentist and symptoms are severe, seek care at a hospital emergency department.

Diet

Drink plenty of fluids and eat soft, nutritious foods. Avoid hot liquids and alcoholic beverages, and do not use a straw for **24 hours**.

You may begin eating solid foods the following day, or when you can chew comfortably. For the first few days, chew on the opposite side of the extraction site. Resume chewing on both sides when comfortable.

Cleaning Your Mouth

On the day of the extraction, avoid brushing or flossing the teeth immediately next to the extraction site. Continue to brush and floss the remainder of your mouth thoroughly, taking care not to disturb the surgical area.

Beginning the **day after the extraction**:

- Gently brush and floss the teeth near the extraction site.



- Brush your tongue to help reduce the unpleasant taste and bad breath that may occur during healing.
- Gently rinse with warm salt water after meals to help keep the area free of food particles. Use **½ teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water**.
- Do not rinse vigorously, as this may disturb the blood clot.
- Avoid mouthwash or alcohol-containing rinses during early healing unless specifically directed by your dentist.

If you have hypertension, consult your dentist regarding the use of salt-water rinses.

When selecting oral hygiene products, consider products displaying the **American Dental Association (ADA) Seal of Acceptance**, which indicates that the product has met the ADA's criteria for safety and effectiveness.

Follow-Up

If sutures require removal, your dentist will provide instructions regarding your follow-up appointment. Please contact our office with any questions or concerns during your recovery.