



Dental Treatment

# Tooth Extraction: Post-Operative Instructions



ADA American Dental Association®

## ADA Healthy Smile Tips

- Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth daily.
- Eat a healthy diet that limits sugary beverages and snacks.
- See your dentist regularly for prevention and treatment of oral disease.

For more information about taking care of your mouth and teeth, visit **MouthHealthy.org**, the ADA's website just for patients.

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Office Telephone Number:

After-Hours Telephone Number:

Next Appointment (Date/Time):

Special Instructions:

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ISBN 978-1-68447-236-9



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Sometimes, teeth need to be removed due to decay, disease or trauma. When you get a tooth removed, it's called an **extraction**.

It's natural that changes will occur in your mouth after a dental procedure or extraction. Here are some general guidelines to help promote healing, prevent complications and make you more comfortable while you recover.

**Follow all instructions from your dental team.** This will help your mouth heal properly after your tooth is removed. These instructions will also help lower your risk of having any problems while your mouth heals.

### Bleeding

Your dentist may place a gauze pad on the extraction site to limit bleeding. This will also help a blood clot form, which is necessary for normal healing. This gauze pad should be left in place for 30 to 45 minutes after you leave the dentist's office.

Do not chew on the gauze. There may be some bleeding or oozing after you remove the gauze pad. If so, here's what to do:

- Fold a piece of clean gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on. Dampen the pad with clean, warm water and place it directly on the extraction site.
- Apply pressure by closing your teeth firmly over the pad. Maintain this pressure for about 30 minutes. As the pad becomes soaked with blood, replace it with a clean one.
- Do not suck on the extraction site or disturb it with your tongue.
- Some blood may leak from the extraction site until a clot forms. If brisk bleeding persists, try placing a heated gauze pad (run under hot water and squeeze out excess water), or a warm, moist black tea bag at the extraction site.
- However, if heavy bleeding continues, call your dentist. (Remember, though, that a little bit of blood mixed with saliva can look like a lot of bleeding.)



### Dry Socket

The blood clot that forms in the tooth socket is an important part of the normal healing process. You should avoid doing things that might disturb the clot. If the blood clot is disturbed and breaks down, you can get a dry socket. Dry sockets can be extremely painful. To lower your risk of a dry socket, be very careful to not do anything that can disturb the clot.

For the first 24 hours, do not suck, spit or slurp. Do not do anything that creates suction in your mouth and puts pressure on your blood clot. This means:

- ⊗ Do not drink through a straw.
- ⊗ Do not smoke. (Smoking can also prevent your gums from healing properly.)
- ⊗ Do not suck on candy, popsicles, lollipops, etc.
- ⊗ Do not slurp up soups or other liquids.
- ⊗ Do not rinse your mouth with too much force.

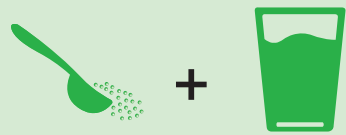
# How to Clean Your Mouth after Your Tooth Is Removed

## Day of procedure:

- Do not clean the teeth next to the healing tooth socket for the rest of the day.
  - You should still brush and floss your other teeth.
  - You can also brush your tongue. This can help get rid of the bad breath and unpleasant taste that are common after an extraction.

## Day after procedure:

- Begin cleaning the teeth next to the healing tooth socket.
- Gently rinse your mouth with warm salt water after meals to keep bits of food out of the extraction site.
  - To make a salt-water rinse, mix half a teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water.



1/2 tsp. salt    1 cup warm water

- Try not to rinse your mouth too hard because this could loosen the blood clot.
- Avoid using a mouthwash during this early healing period or until your dentist says you are able.

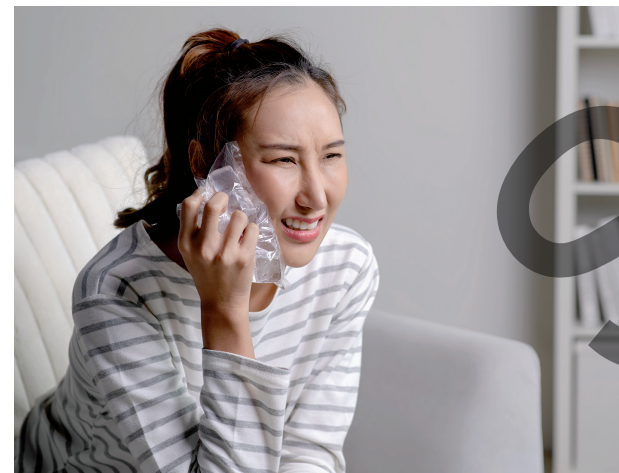
## Eating and Drinking

### Day of procedure:

- Drink lots of liquids and eat soft, nutritious foods.
- Avoid hot liquids.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- Do not use a straw, as this can disturb the blood clot.

### Day after procedure:

- Begin eating solid foods the next day or as soon as you can comfortably chew.
- For the first few days, try to chew food on the opposite side of the extraction site.
- When it feels comfortable, you can resume chewing on both sides of your mouth.



## Take Pain Medication Only as Directed by Your Dentist

If your dentist has prescribed medicine to control pain and inflammation, or to prevent infection, use it only as directed.

In many cases, pain can be controlled with medications you can buy at the store. Research shows that a combination of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen or naproxen used alone or in combination with acetaminophen can manage pain after an extraction. Talk to your dentist about these and other options for controlling pain.

If the pain medication prescribed does not seem to work for you, do not take more pills or take them more often than directed—call your dentist.

## Swelling and Pain Are Normal after a Tooth Is Removed

To help reduce swelling and pain:

- Try applying a cold compress to your face, like an ice pack or a cold, moist cloth.
- Your dentist may give you specific instructions on how long and how often to use a cold compress.

## Call Your Dentist Right Away If You Have Any of These Issues



- Fever, nausea or vomiting
- Ongoing or severe pain, swelling or bleeding
- Pain that gets worse over time instead of better

**If you cannot reach your dentist, go to an urgent care center or hospital emergency room.**

## Other Things You Should Know

- **Avoid alcoholic beverages** or mouthwash that has alcohol in it for 24 hours.
- **Limit physical activity** like exercise or lifting heavy objects for 24 hours after the extraction. This will reduce bleeding and help the blood clot form.
- **If you do get a dry socket, let your dentist know right away.** A dressing may be placed in the socket to protect it until the socket heals and to reduce any pain.