



Raul S. Molina, D.M.D., M.S.
Board-Certified Periodontist

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR TOOTH REMOVAL

The initial healing period typically takes from one to two weeks, gum tissue takes about three to four weeks to heal and complete healing of the bone can take about six months depending on your care of this area. Some discomfort, bleeding and swelling should be expected in the next 24 hours as your mouth heals. As your mouth heals, you can promote faster healing and avoid complications by simply following these instructions.

Do Not Spit or Suck Through A Straw. This will promote a negative pressure that may dislodge the blood clot and can cause a very painful situation known as "dry socket". This means, that after you brush your teeth, you need to be careful how you rinse out. When expectorating, also be gentle.

Do not disturb the wound. We recommend that you avoid playing with your tongue on the surgical site, and brushing directly over it. In doing so you may invite irritation, infection and/or bleeding.

Do not use tobacco products for 48-72 hours after tooth extractions. Continuing to smoke during these first few days will slow the healing process and soft tissue will not be able to begin to fill in the socket to form the blood clot needed for healthy healing. Smoking can also interfere with the bone that surrounds the socket resulting in slowing its process of filling in the socket.

Bleeding. When you leave the office, you will be given verbal instructions regarding the control of postoperative bleeding. A rolled up gauze pad will be placed on the extraction site. You will be asked to change this dressing after 20 minutes or so depending on the amount of bleeding that is occurring. It is normal for some blood to ooze from the area of surgery for 8-12 hours. We will also give you a package of gauze to take with you to use at home if the bleeding should continue. Should you need to use the gauze at home, remember to roll it into a ball large enough to cover the wound. Hold firmly in place, by biting or with finger pressure, for about 30-60 minutes. This pressure helps reduce bleeding and permits a clot to form in the tooth socket. If bleeding still continues, moisten a tea bag with water and fold it in half and bite down on it for 30 minutes. Tea contains tannic acid, which may help to reduce the bleeding. Saliva can be swallowed, even if slightly blood tinged. Be sure to consult with Dr. Raul S. Molina if bleeding persists.

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Swelling. Most people get some swelling and, if they do, it usually happens about 48-72 hours after the surgery. To prevent it, apply an ice pack or a cold towel to the outside of your face in the area of the surgery during the first 12 to 24 hours. Apply alternately, 10-20 minutes on then 10-20 minutes off. If you follow these instructions you should have less swelling than you would have otherwise. If swelling appears 24 hours after the procedure, be patient, warm moist heat will help diminish it and take your anti-inflammatory medication (ibuprofen) as directed.

Medications. Some discomfort is normal after surgery. Please follow the instruction on the bottle for any medications prescribed. If any adverse reaction to those medications should arise, such as nausea, itching, swelling, or any allergic symptoms, please contact the office immediately and discontinue all medication immediately. Generally, we prescribe the following three medications:

Mild/Moderate Pain: Ibuprofen is an anti-inflammatory, non-narcotic pain killer. This medicine will help prevent swelling along with reducing pain. I recommend that one tablet is taken either prior to surgery or prior to the local anesthetic wearing off. Be sure to have some food in your stomach when taking this medicine – it can upset stomachs. This is your “baseline” pain medication.

Moderate/Severe Pain: Acetaminophen with oxycodone is a narcotic pain reliever and can be taken in addition to the ibuprofen, if there is still discomfort. Since acetaminophen with oxycodone can cause drowsiness, it is best taken before bedtime, if needed.

If Antibiotics are prescribed, you should carefully follow the instructions and finish the antibiotics until they are completely gone, as long as here are no adverse reactions or discomfort (redness, itching, etc.)

Anesthesia Warning. When a local anesthetic is used your lip, tongue and cheek will be numb for several hours after the procedure. While it is numb, it will feel "funny." During this period you must be careful not to bite, chew, pinch and/or scratch this area, which can lead to serious soft tissue trauma.

Brushing. For several days after the extraction, it is important to keep the area as clean as possible to prevent infection and promote healing. Do not directly brush the extraction site for the first three to four days to prevent dislodging of the blood clot from the socket. Instead this area can be gently and carefully wiped with a clean, wet gauze pad or cloth. After this time you may carefully brush your teeth around this area and floss gently.

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Mouthwash. Avoid all rinsing for 24 hours after extraction. This is to ensure the formation of a blood clot. Disturbance of this clot can lead to increased bleeding or the loss of the blood clot. After the first 24 hours you should rinse this area using warm salt water (1/4tsp. salt in 8oz of warm water) or mild antiseptic rinses like Breath RX®. Rinse very gently after every meal and snack, making sure that the water reaches the extraction site. Rinsing removes food particles and debris from the socket to help promote healing. You need to be careful how you rinse out.

Diet. For the first 24-48 hours, you should maintain a diet of soft foods, such as Jell-O, pudding, yogurt, mashed potatoes, soups, etc. Food that crumbles such as potato chips, popcorn, crackers, cookies, etc. should be avoided, as well as seedy fruits like strawberries and blackberries. Hot spicy foods should also be avoided to prevent irritation and burns of the extraction site. Eating immediately following the procedure is not recommended. When the numbness has worn off you may eat, yet be sure to chew on the opposite side for the first 48 hours in order to keep food away from the extraction site. Also, keep anything sharp from entering the wound (e.g., eating utensils, fingers and other objects, etc.). It is also important to drink plenty of fluids in between meals and with meals. Return to normal diet as tolerated.

Activity. For the first 24 hours, your activity should be limited because increased activity can lead to increased bleeding. No heavy lifting for two to three days. Do not play any wind instruments or blow up balloons for a period of 10-14 days.

PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS?

If you need to contact Dr. Raul S. Molina or

your Surgery Coordinator Cindy Kaleel

please call 904.731.1324 or after 5:00PM at 904.314.2507