

After a Tooth Extraction

Most people feel noticeably better within a few days. These steps protect the blood clot that forms in the socket, because that clot is what lets everything heal well.

The first few hours

- Bite down firmly on the gauze we gave you until the bleeding slows. Some oozing is normal, so swap in fresh gauze whenever it soaks through.
- Plan a quiet day. Skip the gym and heavy lifting, and go back to your usual routine tomorrow as you feel up to it.
- If a child had the extraction, keep an eye on them while they're numb so they don't chew their lip, cheek or tongue.

The first 24 hours

- Don't use a straw, spit, rinse, brush near the site or smoke. Each of these can pull the clot loose.
- Stick to cool liquids and soft foods: soups that have cooled, yogurt, smoothies (with a spoon) and juice. Skip hot, spicy, fizzy and alcoholic drinks.
- For swelling, hold a cold compress on your cheek for up to 20 minutes on and at least 20 minutes off. Always keep a cloth between ice and your skin. After about 36 hours, cold stops helping, and gentle moist heat feels better.

Medicine

- Fill any prescriptions we gave you and take them exactly as directed, including the full course of any antibiotic.
- If you were prescribed something stronger than ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol), don't drive or operate machinery while you take it.

Days two and beyond

- Starting the day after, rinse gently with warm salt water (about half a teaspoon of salt in an eight-ounce glass) three times a day.
- Brush the rest of your mouth as usual, and go easy around the site.
- Most stitches we place dissolve on their own in 7 to 10 days. If yours need to come out, we'll tell you at your visit.

If you had wisdom teeth removed

- Sit up slowly for the first few days, since it's common to feel a little light-headed when you stand.
- Give yourself three to four days before any hard exercise, and skip straws and drinking from a bottle for 24 to 48 hours.
- Keep up the salt water rinses for 7 to 10 days. If we gave you an irrigating syringe, wait five days, then use it with warm salt water to flush the socket clean.
- Some numbness of the lip, chin or tongue can linger for a few days. Chew carefully until it fades.
- Throbbing pain three to four days later that spreads toward your ear or jaw and doesn't ease with medicine can be a dry socket. Call us and we'll get you comfortable.

Call us if bleeding won't slow down, swelling keeps growing after the third day, or the pain gets worse instead of better. 845-358-5110

For a serious or life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

This is general advice only. Please contact your doctor directly if you need specific care instructions.

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