

## **Tooth Extraction**

### **After a tooth extraction, caring for your mouth: After a Tooth Extraction: Caring for Your Mouth**

When you've had a tooth extracted (removed), you need to take care of your mouth. Doing certain things, even on the first day, may help you feel better and heal faster.

#### **Control Bleeding**

To help control bleeding, bite firmly on the gauze placed by your dentist. The pressure helps to form a blood clot in the tooth socket. If you have a lot of bleeding, bite on a regular tea bag. The tannic acid in the tea aids in forming a blood clot. Bite on the gauze or the tea bag until the bleeding stops. Slight oozing of blood on the first day is normal.

#### **Minimize Pain**

To lessen any pain, take prescribed medication as directed. Don't drive while taking any pain medication as you may feel drowsy. Ask your dentist if you may take over-the-counter medication, if needed.

#### **Reduce Swelling**

To reduce swelling, put an ice pack on your cheek near the extraction site. You can make an ice pack by putting ice in a plastic bag and wrapping it in a thin towel. Apply the ice pack to your cheek for 10 minutes. Then, remove it for 5 minutes. Repeat as needed. You may see some bruising on your face. This is normal and will go away on its own.

#### **Get Enough Rest**

Limit activities for the first 24 hours after an extraction. Rest during the day and go to bed early. When lying down, elevate your head slightly.

#### **Do's**

Below are some things to do to help your mouth heal.

**Do eat a diet of soft, healthy foods and snacks.** It may be easier for you to eat soft foods soon after your extraction. Also, drink plenty of liquids.

**Do brush your teeth gently.** Avoid brushing around the extraction. And don't use any toothpaste. Rinsing toothpaste from your mouth may dislodge the blood clot.

**Do keep the extraction site clean.** After 12 hours you may be able to gently rinse your mouth. Rinse 4 times a day with 1 teaspoon of salt in a glass of water. Check with your dentist first.

#### **Don'ts**

Below are some things to avoid while you're healing.

**Don't drink with a straw.** Sucking on a straw may dislodge the blood clot.

**Don't drink hot liquids.** Hot liquids may increase swelling. Limit your alcohol use. Excessive use of alcohol may slow healing.

**Don't smoke.** Smoking may break down the blood clot, causing a painful tooth socket.