

When you've had a tooth extracted (removed), you need to take care of your mouth. Doing certain things, even on your 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 tea bag until the bleeding stops.

## **MINIMIZE PAIN**

To lessen any pain, take prescribed medication as directed. **DO NOT** 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** - Below are some things you can 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. Drink plenty of liquids while you're healing.
- **Do brush your teeth gently.** Avoid brushing around the extraction site and do not use any toothpaste. Rinsing toothpaste may dislodge the blood clot.
- **Do keep the extraction site clean.** After 12 hours you gently rinse your mouth. Rinse 4 times a day with 1 teaspoon of salt in a glass of water. Check with your dentist first.

**DO NOT** - Below are some things to avoid while you're healing.

- **Do not drink with a straw.** Sucking on a straw will dislodge the blood clot.
- **Do not drink hot liquids.** Hot liquids may increase swelling. Limit your alcohol use. Excessive use of alcohol may slow healing.
- **Do not smoke.** Smoking may break down the blood clot, causing a painful tooth socket.

## **CALL YOUR DENTIST IF:**

- Pain becomes more severe the day after your extraction.
- Bleeding becomes hard to control (slight oozing on the first day is normal).
- Swelling around the extraction site worsens.
- Itching or rashes occur after you take medication (possible allergic reaction).