

Some bleeding from a fresh extraction socket is normal. To help minimize bleeding, please follow these instructions:

1. Bite with firm continuous pressure on a folded gauze where any teeth were removed for the next 30 minutes. This helps a good blood clot form. If there is still some oozing of blood, bite on a fresh gauze for an additional 30 minutes. If there still continues to be oozing, at this point biting on a tea bag for 30 minutes at the site of oozing may help. If you are actively bleeding or continue to ooze large amounts to blood, please call one of the numbers listed below.
2. Do not use gauze when sleeping. Use an old pillowcase, because you may have a small amount of blood-stained fluid on your pillowcase in the morning.
3. Do not smoke, spit, gargle, or suck thick fluids through a straw for the next 24 hours.
4. Do not disturb the clot with your tongue.
5. Do not pick or brush at any extraction site. If you have sutures (stitches), they will dissolve or fall out on their own, unless you are told otherwise. If you need an appointment to have your sutures removed, you will be scheduled for a post-op visit.

What to eat and drink after extractions:

1. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids (iced tea is good) for the rest of the day. If you have no nausea, you may have liquids like milkshakes, but use a spoon. Keep yourself hydrated.
2. You may begin eating a soft diet (food that does not need chewing, such as scrambled eggs, yogurt, applesauce, soup, etc.). Avoid chewing "hard" foods for 7 days.
3. Avoid strenuous (physical) activity, such as heavy lifting for 48 hours or longer, if prescribed by the doctor.

Oral hygiene:

1. Tomorrow you may gently rinse your mouth with dilute salt water (especially after meals) to rinse away food particles. Use one teaspoon of salt in a cup of water. Swirl and gently let the salt water drain from your mouth. Do not forcefully spit. Continue this regimen for a few days.
2. Brush your teeth, but avoid brushing the extraction site(s) for seven days.

Post-extraction discomfort:

1. Some discomfort after dental extractions is normal. In most cases, over-the-counter, non-narcotic pain relievers are all that is needed to help control the discomfort.
2. In some situations, a narcotic medication may be indicated, and a prescription for one may be provided. Follow the instructions on the label carefully. Some pain medications may cause drowsiness; do not drive or make important decisions while taking them. Many narcotic medications cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach, so have a meal or a snack before taking them.

Swelling and bruising:

1. Some swelling may occur after extractions, and that is normal. If swelling seems excessive or first develops three days after extractions, please call one of the numbers listed below.
2. You may wrap ice chips or ice cubes in a clean towel and apply to the outside of your face to reduce swelling—15 minutes on, 15 minutes off, for 3 hours.
3. If post-extraction swelling becomes firm to touch, skin over the swelling develops redness, you develop a fever, you have difficulty swallowing, or you have trouble controlling your saliva, you should call one of the numbers below to be seen.
4. Some skin discoloration (bruising) may occur after extractions due to blood seeping into the skin. It may appear alarming, but it is not dangerous and will go away with time.

Post-operative problems:

1. Failure of a good clot to form and stay in place during healing may result in a problem called a “dry socket.” This exposes the bone in the socket and typically arises 3-4 days after the tooth was removed. It is common in the lower arch when the back teeth are removed. If you had good pain relief and later develop severe pain, call one of the numbers listed below so you can be re-evaluated.
2. After extractions, small bone fragments may work their way through your gums over the next few weeks. If you can wiggle them free, they may simply be discarded. If they are painful, call one of the numbers below to schedule a follow-up visit to be re-evaluated.
3. If you had surgery on your lower jaw, you may find your jaw feeling stiff or sore when you try to open it widely. This is normal and will resolve in a few days. If jaw stiffness worsens, call one of the numbers listed below to schedule a follow-up visit.

If you have questions or concerns, please call our office during normal business hours at 252-756-0687.

On weekends, holidays, and after hours, please call: 252-375-4850.