

S DENTAL STUDIO

Advice following a tooth extraction

For the rest of today

Numbness

Your mouth is likely to feel numb for a few hours following your tooth extraction so please don't have any **hot** food or drinks until normal feeling returns, otherwise you might burn or scald your mouth. Also take care not to bite your tongue, particularly when you speak, drink or eat.

Your mouth may feel sore once the anaesthetic wears off, possibly due to the injection site(s) of the local anaesthetic needle and consequent bruising to the surrounding area (please see below for advice on pain relief medications)

Activity

Rest as much as possible and keep your head up to reduce the bleeding. Do not participate in strenuous activity for at least 24 hours post-extraction (including cardiovascular exercise, bending and heavy lifting/housework!)

Swelling

To help minimise/reduce any swelling occurring, for the next two to three hours place ice packs on the area(s) of the face corresponding to the surgical site(s) for 20 minutes on, 10 minutes off. You can use an ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a towel.

Bleeding

Try not to poke the extraction site with your tongue or finger. The blood clot which is forming needs time to establish itself and stabilise, for the healing to progress well. Disturbing the blood clot can delay normal healing by causing a "dry socket" (alveolar osteitis)

Some slight bleeding or oozing from the surgical site is normal. However, if continuous bleeding occurs, take a gauze/clean handkerchief/flannel and moisten it with water (so that the material doesn't stick to the blood clot) then apply firm pressure on the areas for 10 minutes, without removing the material pack to check it. If the local anaesthetic has worn off and you no longer feel numb, applying pressure correctly is likely to be a bit uncomfortable. If applying pressure biting on a damp bite-pack does not stop the bleeding, please call the dental surgery.

You might notice some bleeding for a day or two. The blood will be mixed with your saliva, which can make it look like there's more blood than there actually is. But if the bleeding doesn't stop, contact your dentist.

Oral hygiene

Take care cleaning your teeth, brush the chewing surfaces of your teeth gently as often as you normally would do so. Keep your toothbrush away from the healing wound to begin with, brushing closer to it each day. You could try softening your toothbrush in hot water before you brush. Remember, wounds heal better when they are kept as clean as possible.

Eating

Start with liquid or very soft food for the first day or two. Eat soft food once you first have your tooth removed, so you don't have to chew much. Gradually progress to harder foods. If you think you have food debris caught in the hole left by the extracted tooth, **please do not** try to pick it out.

Nutrition is important, so if you don't feel like eating a big meal, you might consider eating several smaller meals.

Alcohol

We advise you not to drink alcohol for at least 24 hours post-extraction.

Smoking

Please avoid smoking!

Don't smoke for as long as possible, but at least for the rest of the day. Smoking can greatly increase your chances of developing post-operative dry socket and infection.

Pain relief medications

Following a simple extraction, you may not feel you need to take pain-killers. However, if necessary you can take over-the-counter painkillers, we recommend paracetamol plus/minus ibuprofen.

If your extraction was difficult, you may require regular pain relief for 7-10 days. Your dentist will arrange a review appointment with you, so please continue with taking regular pain relief medication(s) under their direction. Additionally, you may like to take Co-codamol which is available to buy over-the-counter in the dose 8/500 (8mg codeine with 500mg paracetamol) Do **not** take additional paracetamol if you take Co-codamol.

Please follow the doses given on the packet(s) and do not exceed 4g of paracetamol in any 24 hours. Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicines. If you have any questions, please ask your dentist or a pharmacist for advice.

Over the next few days

Most people can go back to their normal routine the next day. However, if you have a more difficult surgical extraction, it can take a number of days before you feel ready to return to your normal routine. Your discomfort should settle down completely within about 10 days.

Don't rinse your mouth out for at least 24 hours after a tooth removal, as this could disturb any blood clot that has formed and/or you may start bleeding again. After 24 hours, rinse gently with a salt water mouthwash (made using salt and hot, but not boiling water), four times a day to keep the area clean.

Some people find that their pain is worse about three days after the procedure, but then settles down again within a week to 10 days. This is completely normal. If you're in severe pain and it gets worse, contact your dentist. They'll check that nothing else is causing it, such as an infection.

Bruising

You might have some bruising for a couple of weeks and your jaw may feel a little stiff for a week. Don't force your jaw open if it's stiff.

Stitches (sutures)

You may have stitches, depending on which tooth was removed, and why. Your dentist will arrange a review appointment within a week of the extraction to remove these and check healing is progressing well.

Over the next few weeks

Complications are when problems occur during or after a procedure. Complications of having a tooth removed include:

1. Damage to other teeth

This might happen when your dentist removes your tooth, particularly if the teeth next to the one being removed have a large filling or crown.

2. Sensitive teeth

The teeth next to the one that's removed may feel sensitive and this may last several weeks.

3. Poor healing

If the blood doesn't clot properly in your tooth socket, it won't heal properly. This is called dry socket and can be very painful. You're more likely to develop dry socket if you smoke or take oral contraceptives. If you suspect you are developing a dry socket, please arrange to see your dentist straightaway. They will very gently clean the socket and place a sedative dressing in the socket which acts like a blood clot, and may prescribe you antibiotics.

4. A nerve injury

You might get a tingling or pins and needles or a numb feeling in your gum/lip near the tooth socket which continues after the local anaesthetic has worn off (4-6 hours post-extraction) This may be caused if your nerves are bruised in the procedure, and usually won't last long. Please arrange to see your dentist as soon as possible because they will want to monitor you closely.

You don't always need a follow-up appointment after you've had a tooth removed. But if you had a complicated procedure, you might need to go back to see your dentist so they can check how you're healing. You'll be given a date for this while you're in practice.

Please call us at 760000 if you have any questions or concerns.