

After a Tooth Extraction

Caring for your mouth at home

This handout gives self-care instructions after having a tooth removed.

Day of Extraction

- Keep your tongue out of the extraction areas.
- Keep gauze pack firmly in place for about 1 hour.
- After 1 hour, remove the gauze pack. If the area is still bleeding:
 - Place a new moist gauze over the extraction site.
 - Apply pressure for 1 more hour.
- For 24 hours:
 - Do not rinse your mouth or spit.
 - Do not smoke.
 - Do not drink alcohol.
 - Do not drink carbonated fluids.
 - Do not suck on anything, such as a straw or hard candy.
- You may have soft foods such as instant breakfast, milkshakes (no straws), warm soups, yogurt, and mashed potatoes.
- Brush your teeth as usual, but be gentle near the extraction site.
- For at least 24 hours, get plenty of rest. Avoid vigorous physical activity.
- Sit upright and relax for the rest of the day.
- Sleep with your head raised on a few pillows the first night after surgery.
- Take all medicines **exactly** as your doctor prescribed.



Get plenty of rest and sit upright for the rest of the day after your extraction.

24 Hours After Extraction

- Rinse your mouth with warm salt water:
 - Use ½ teaspoon salt to 8 ounces of water.
 - Rinse your mouth after every meal and before bed. **Do not spit for 1 week.**
- Brush your teeth as usual, but do not brush the extraction site. **Do not spit for 1 week.**
- Keep taking pain medicine as needed. If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, keep taking them as directed until they are all gone.
- Keep eating healthy foods, drink lots of liquids, and get plenty of rest. **Do not use a straw for 1 week.**

What to Expect

Stitches

Stitches will dissolve on their own. They do not need to be removed.

Swelling

You may have some swelling for the first few days. If the swelling gets worse or does not start to lessen in 3 to 4 days, call one of the numbers listed below under “Who to Call.”

Pain

After the *anesthetic* (numbing medicine) wears off, you may have some pain. Take the pain medicine your doctor prescribed, if needed. Take the medicine with food. **Do not** take it on an empty stomach.

If the pain increases or lasts longer than 3 days, call the clinic.

Bleeding

You can expect some minor bleeding for at least 2 to 4 hours. Call one of the numbers listed below under “Who to Call” if:

- Bleeding lasts longer than 6 hours
- There seems to be a lot of bleeding

Who to Call

If you have questions or problems:

- Weekdays from 8a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call 206.744.3189.
- After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.744.3000. Ask to page the Oral Maxillofacial Surgery Resident on call. Tell them that you are a patient of the Oral Surgery Clinic and just had a tooth extraction.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic

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