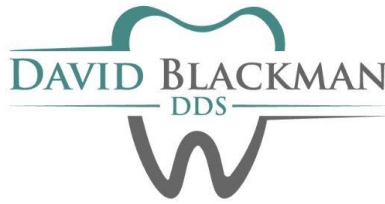


# Post-Operative Instructions for Extractions



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## **Immediately Following Surgery for Tooth Extraction:**

Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the **first hour** unless the bleeding is not controlled. The packs may be gently removed after one hour. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30-45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning.

## **Bleeding After Tooth Extraction:**

Slight bleeding and redness in the saliva are common after tooth extraction surgery. If there is excess bleeding, gently wipe any old clots from mouth and then place clean new gauze over the area and bite firmly for 30-40 minutes. Repeat every 30-40 minutes with new gauze. Bleeding should never be severe, if excessive bleeding continues, bite on a cold-water-moistened tea bag firmly for 30-40 minutes. Slowly remove the tea bag and leave the area alone. If there is still continued excessive bleeding, call our office for further instructions. Also, avoid excessive talking, drinking from a straw, or excessive chewing if there is continued bleeding.

## **Swelling After Tooth Extraction:**

Swelling is normal after any surgical procedure involving tooth extraction. The extent of swelling varies and depends on the extent of the surgery and each patient. Swelling around the mouth, jaws, cheeks and below the eyes is not uncommon. The swelling will usually reach its maximum 2-3 days after the tooth extraction procedure. The swelling can be decreased by the immediate use of ice packs in the first 24 hours. Ice packs should be applied to the outside next to where the surgery was done. Keep the ice on for 20-30 minutes at a time, and then remove for 20-30 minutes. Also, sitting upright and not lying flat on the first day will help to decrease the amount of swelling. You may have been prescribed other anti-inflammatory medications such as dexamethasone (Decadron ®). If you were prescribed these medications, follow the instructions written on the bottle. **\*Swelling and pain is greatest 48-72 hours post-surgery and will start to subside on day 3 but not completely until between days 5-7 post-op\***

## **Pain After Tooth Extraction:**

Pain medications are normally required after tooth extraction surgery. **If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.** If you can take Ibuprofen (Motrin ® or Advil ®), take 400-600 mg every 6-8 hours or as prescribed by your doctor. Ibuprofen will help with pain relief and as an anti-inflammatory. If you cannot take Ibuprofen, then 1-2 tablets of regular Tylenol ® should be taken every 4 hours. If you were prescribed a stronger pain medication such as Vicodin ®, Norco ®, Tylenol ® with codeine, or Percocet ® you can take that in addition to your Ibuprofen if the pain is severe. Follow the directions written on your prescription bottle. If you do take any of these medications, do not drive or work around machinery. Also, avoid alcohol while taking these medications.

## **Nausea and Vomiting After Tooth Extraction:**

After IV sedation or general anesthesia for a tooth extraction, some patients may feel nauseated and vomit. To help avoid this problem, do not take your medications on an empty stomach. Hold off on your medications, if possible, until the nausea subsides. Try to stay hydrated with liquids. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Try to keep taking clear fluids and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call the office if you do not feel better. **\*Classic Coca-Cola may help with nausea\***

**Diet After Tooth Extraction:**

If you had IV sedation or general anesthesia for your tooth extraction procedure, liquids should be initially taken. Your diet can then progress to more solids as tolerated. Ensure adequate fluids and nutrition to prevent dehydration. Eat nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot, sharp and spicy foods. Do not use a straw for the first 7 days post-surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to confine the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, mild shakes, etc.). It is best to avoid foods like nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc., which may get lodged in the socket areas. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

**Instructions To Follow Surgery****Brushing:**

Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

**Hot Applications:**

Beginning on day 2 post-op you may apply warm moist compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas. This will also help decrease swelling and stiffness.

**Healing:**

Normal healing after tooth extraction should be as follows: The first 3 days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. **\*Please do NOT smoke for at least 7-10 days\***. The remainder of the post-operative course should be a gradual, steady improvement. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office. It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call us.

**Dry Socket:**

The most common complication following extractions is a dry socket. A dry socket happens when the blood clot that forms inside the socket after extractions is removed or destroyed. The nerves inside the socket are exposed causing significant amount of pain radiating to your shoulder and ear. Following these instructions above will help to eliminate this complication. But, a dry socket, will eventually resolve on its own and if desired, medication can be placed inside the socket to diminish pain while this socket is healing.