OnSite SURGICAL PARTNERS

Post-Operative Instructions

Tooth Extraction

Following these instructions closely will help you heal quickly and avoid complications. Please also review our **Managing Pain After Oral Surgery** handout.

Immediately After Surgery

- If you received sedation, a responsible adult must drive you home and stay with you. Do not drive, operate machinery, or make important decisions for 24 hours.
- If you feel faint or light-headed at any time, do not drive. Sit or lie down until it passes.
- While you are numb, be careful not to bite or chew your cheek, lip, or tongue. Avoid hot foods and drinks until the numbness wears off.

Bleeding

- Keep the gauze in place and bite with **firm, steady pressure for 30–45 minutes**. Do not chew on it or keep checking it.
- If bleeding continues, place a fresh, slightly moistened, folded gauze directly over the site and bite firmly for another 30–45 minutes.
- For persistent oozing, bite on a moistened black tea bag wrapped in gauze for 30 minutes. Tea contains tannic acid, which helps blood clot.
- Pink or blood-tinged saliva is normal for 24–48 hours. Rest with your head elevated on two pillows, and place a towel on your pillowcase to protect it.

Protecting the Blood Clot

The blood clot that forms in the socket is essential for healing. Losing it can cause a painful condition called dry socket.

- **For the first 24 hours:** do not rinse, spit forcefully, or brush the extraction site.
- **For at least 3 days (ideally 7):** do not drink through a straw.
- **For at least 3 days (ideally 7):** do not smoke or vape. Smoking is the leading cause of dry socket and delayed healing.
- Avoid strenuous exercise and heavy lifting for 48 hours.

Swelling and Bruising

- Apply an ice pack to the outside of your face, **20 minutes on, 20 minutes off**, for the first 24–36 hours while awake.
- Swelling usually peaks on day 2–3. After 48 hours, switch to warm, moist compresses to help it resolve.
- Bruising of the face or neck may appear and is normal. It fades within 1–2 weeks.
- Stiffness of the jaw is common for a few days. Gentle opening and closing helps.

Diet

- Drink plenty of fluids: water, juice, broth, and smoothies (with a spoon, not a straw).
- Eat soft, cool foods for the first 2–3 days, such as yogurt, applesauce, mashed potatoes, eggs, and pasta. Advance to your normal diet as you are comfortable.
- Chew on the opposite side. Avoid hard, crunchy, sharp, or spicy foods for about a week.
- Avoid popcorn, nuts, chips, and small seeds, which can lodge in the socket.
- Avoid alcohol for 48 hours and while taking any prescription pain medication.

Oral Hygiene

- Brush and floss your other teeth normally starting tonight, staying away from the extraction site.
- **Starting the day after surgery:** gently rinse with warm salt water (½ teaspoon salt in an 8 oz glass of water) after meals and at bedtime for one week. Let the water fall from your mouth rather than spitting forcefully.
- If you were prescribed a chlorhexidine (Peridex) rinse, use it as directed.

What Is Normal

- Discomfort that is worst on days 1–3 and steadily improves.
- A white or yellow film in the socket. This is healing tissue, not infection.
- Sharp bony edges you can feel with your tongue. These usually smooth out or work their way out on their own.
- If you have stitches, they will dissolve in 5–10 days unless you are told otherwise.

Possible dry socket: pain that suddenly gets worse on day 2–4, often spreading to the ear, with a bad taste or odor. This is treatable. Please call your dental office.

When to Call Your Dental Office

Call the dental office where your procedure was done if you have:

- Bleeding that is not controlled after two 45-minute rounds of firm gauze pressure
- Fever above 101°F, or chills
- Swelling that is still increasing after day 3, or pus or a bad taste from the site
- Pain that gets worse after day 3 or is not controlled by your medication
- Numbness that has not worn off by the next day
- Rash, hives, itching, or severe diarrhea while taking a prescribed medication

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for:

- Difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Swelling spreading to the eye, under the jaw, or down the neck
- Heavy bleeding that soaks through gauze and will not stop
- Chest pain, fainting, or signs of a severe allergic reaction (face or throat swelling)

Your surgery was performed by OnSite Surgical Partners at your dental office. For any questions about your healing or your care, contact that office.