

Post-Operative Instructions

Tooth Extraction

Following your extraction, please allow a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. Following these instructions carefully will promote healing and minimize discomfort.

Bleeding

- Bite firmly on the gauze pad provided for **30–60 minutes** after the procedure. Change it as needed if saturated.
- Some oozing is normal for the first 24 hours. If heavy bleeding continues, call our office.
- Do not spit, rinse forcefully, or use a straw for the first 24 hours — this may dislodge the blood clot.

Swelling

- Apply an ice pack to the outside of your face for 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off during the first 24 hours.
- Swelling typically peaks at 48–72 hours and then subsides. This is a normal part of healing.
- After 24 hours, warm moist heat may help reduce residual swelling.

Pain Management

- Take prescribed medications as directed. Over-the-counter **ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin)** or **acetaminophen (Tylenol)** are effective for mild to moderate discomfort.
- Take pain medication before the anesthetic wears off for best results.
- Do not take aspirin — it may increase bleeding.

Diet & Eating

- Eat soft foods: yogurt, pudding, lukewarm soups, scrambled eggs, and mashed potatoes.
- Avoid hard, crunchy, or chewy foods near the extraction site until healing is complete.
- Stay well hydrated. Drink plenty of water.
- Do not use a straw for at least 72 hours. Suction can dislodge the blood clot.
- Avoid very hot foods or beverages until the numbness has completely worn off.

Oral Hygiene

- Do not rinse or brush near the extraction site for the first 24 hours.
- Beginning **the day after** your procedure, gently rinse with warm salt water (1/2 tsp salt in 8 oz. warm water) 2–3 times daily, especially after meals.
- Brush and floss your other teeth normally. Be gentle near the extraction site.
- Do not use alcohol-based mouthwash for at least one week.

Things to Avoid

- Do not smoke or use tobacco products for at least 72 hours — smoking greatly increases the risk of dry socket.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity for 24–48 hours after your procedure.
- Do not probe or touch the extraction site with your tongue or fingers.
- Avoid alcohol for at least 24 hours or while taking prescription pain medications.

Watch for Dry Socket

Dry socket may occur if the blood clot is lost before the wound heals. Signs include:

- Severe, throbbing pain 2–4 days after extraction not controlled by pain medication
- Pain radiating to the ear or jaw
- Visible empty socket or exposed bone

If you suspect dry socket, please contact our office immediately.

Questions or Concerns? Call Us Anytime.

Gardens Dentistry • (561) 508-6923

After-hours emergencies: please use the emergency line listed on our voicemail.