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## Post-Operative Instructions for Tooth Extractions

**Do not disturb the extraction site.** The healing process begins immediately after an extraction. Simple pressure from a piece of gauze is all that is needed to control the bleeding and to help a blood clot to form.

**Do not use tobacco products for 48-72 hours.** Smoking can especially interfere with the healing process, promote bleeding, and can cause a very painful situation known as a "dry socket".

**Brushing.** Do not directly brush the extraction site for the first three to four days after an extraction to prevent dislodging of the blood clot from the socket.

**Rinsing.** Avoid all rinsing for **24 hours** after an extraction. After the first 24 hours you should rinse the area using warm salt water. Rinse very gently after every meal.

**Do Not Spit/Drink Through a Straw.** This may dislodge the blood clot & cause a "dry socket".

**Bleeding.** Bleeding is normal for 8-12 hours following an extraction. If bleeding continues, moisten a tea bag with water and fold it in half and bite down on it for 30 minutes. Tea contains tannic acid which may help to reduce the bleeding. *Please call our office if excessive bleeding continues after 24 hours.*

**Medications.** Some discomfort is normal after surgery. Non-aspirin medications can be taken as needed. If given, prescription medications should be taken as directed. If antibiotics are prescribed, you should carefully follow instructions and take the antibiotics until they are **completely gone**.

**Swelling.** To prevent swelling, apply an ice pack or a cold towel to the outside of your face in the area of the extraction during the first 12-24 hours.

**Diet.** For the first 24 hours you should maintain a soft food diet and avoid carbonated & alcoholic beverages.

**Activity.** For the first 24 hours activity should be limited, increased activity can lead to increased bleeding. No bending over or heavy lifting for two to three days.

**Long term problems.** Having a missing tooth can lead to several problems such as shifting teeth and difficulty chewing, which could lead to TMJ problems. This area will eventually need to be restored with a dental implant, bridge, partial or denture to insure long-term dental health.