

EXTRACTION

One of the main goals of modern dentistry is the prevention of tooth loss. All possible measures should be taken to preserve and maintain your teeth because the loss of a single tooth can have a major impact upon your dental health and appearance. However, it is still sometimes necessary to remove a tooth. Here are some of the reasons a tooth may need to be extracted.

- Severe Decay
- Advanced periodontal disease
- Infection or abscess
- Orthodontic correction
- Malpositioned teeth
- Fractured teeth or roots
- Impacted teeth

If you've just had a tooth extracted or your dentist has recommended that a tooth be extracted, the following information will help you get through the first few days after your extraction. Should anything occur that seems out of the normal, do not hesitate to call your dentist.

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- **DO NOT DISTURB THE WOUND:** In doing so you may invite irritation, infection and/or bleeding. Be sure to chew on the opposite side for 24 hours and keep anything sharp from entering the wound (i.e. eating utensils etc.).
- **DO NOT SMOKE FOR 12 HOURS:** Smoking will promote bleeding and interfere with healing.
- **BRUSHING:** Do not brush your teeth for the first 8 hours after surgery. After, you may brush your teeth gently, but avoid the area of surgery.
- **MOUTH WASH:** Avoid all rinsing for 24 hours after extraction. This is to insure the formation of a healing blood clot which is essential to proper wound healing. Disturbance of this clot can lead to increased bleeding or the loss of the blood clot. If the clot is lost, a painful condition called dry socket may occur. You may use warm salt water or mild antiseptic rinses after 24 hours *only if prescribed*.
- **DO NOT SPIT OR SUCK THROUGH A STRAW:** This will promote bleeding and may dislodge the blood clot causing a dry socket.
- **BLEEDING:** When you leave the office, you will be given verbal instructions regarding the control of postoperative bleeding. A rolled up gauze pad will be placed on the extraction site and you will be asked to change this dressing every 20 minutes or so depending on the amount of bleeding that is occurring. It is normal for some blood to ooze from the area of surgery. We will also give you a package of gauze to take with you to use at home if the bleeding should continue. Should you need to use the gauze at home, remember to roll it into a ball large enough to cover the wound. Hold firmly in place, by biting or with finger pressure for about 20-30 minutes. If bleeding still continues, you may fold a tea bag in half and bite down on it. Tea contains Tannic Acid, a styptic, which may help to reduce the bleeding.
- **PAIN:** Some discomfort is normal after surgery. Analgesic tablets (i.e. Aspirin, Tylenol etc.) may be taken under your dentist's direction. Prescription medication, which may have

been given to you, should also be taken as directed. If pain continues, call your dentist.

- **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 hours. Apply alternately, 20 minutes on then 20 minutes off, for an hour or longer if necessary.
- **DIET:** Eat normal regular meals as soon as you are able after surgery. Cold, soft food such as ice cream or yogurt may be the most comfortable for the first day. It is also important to drink plenty of fluids.

**REPORT ANY UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES
IMMEDIATELY!**