

# Post Operative Instructions Following an Extraction

A blood clot will form at the extraction site. This clot is vital to the healing process. To keep the clot intact:

- **Do Not smoke:** the nicotine in tobacco stimulates continued oozing and retards healing.
- **Do Not spit vigorously.**
- **Do Not use a straw.**
- **Do Not consume carbonated or alcoholic beverages.**
- **Do Not touch the extraction site with your tongue or fingers.**
- **Do Not blow your nose or sneeze violently:** can also dislodge the blood clot and impair healing, so if you have an upper respiratory infection or suffer from allergies, be sure to have the appropriate sinus medication on hand.
- **Do Not rinse your mouth the day of the surgery.**

## **Bleeding**

- Maintain pressure over the extraction site with gauze for 45-60 minutes by biting down on the gauze. If bleeding continues, replace with fresh gauze and keep pressure for 30-45 minutes at a time until bleeding has stopped. We will give you a supply of sterilized gauze sponges to place over the extraction site.
- If you run out of gauze you can use a moistened tea bag instead. Tea contains tannic acid which will help stop the bleeding.
- It is not unusual to have a slight oozing for 24 hours and periodic breakthrough bleeding for 10 days after an extraction. A drop or two of blood mixed with saliva may seem like a mouth full of blood.
- Keep your head elevated with pillows to control bleeding. Place a towel on your pillow to prevent staining your linen with blood.

## **Swelling**

- The initial healing period usually takes one to two weeks, and you'll likely experience some swelling for the first 24-48 hours.
- To minimize swelling, apply an ice pack - 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off - for the first eight hours following the extraction. Use ice for the first day only as it is no longer effective after the first day. Use a warm moist cloth to reduce swelling on days 2-4.

## **Pain**

- Mild to Moderate Pain: Some discomfort after the extraction is normal. An over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, is usually sufficient. Follow label directions.

- Severe Pain: We can also give you a prescription for a stronger pain reliever, if needed. Make sure you take the medication according to the instructions. Pain medication may take up to an hour to take effect and may only work 3-4 hours. It is important to try and keep ahead of anticipated pain. Do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking pain medication.
- To avoid nausea, do not take pain medication on an empty stomach.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone. Women of childbearing age should know of the possible **reduced effectiveness of oral contraceptives during antibiotic therapy** and are advised to use additional form of contraception during short-term antibiotic use.

### **Oral Hygiene**

- After 24 hours, you can rinse gently with a warm salt-water solution (dissolve one teaspoon of salt with one cup of warm water). Repeat every 2 hours until normal healing has occurred.
- The day after surgery gently brush all teeth not near the extraction site at least twice a day.

### **Eating**

- Once the numbness has worn off, you should eat, as nourishment is important to the healing process. Limit your diet to liquids or soft foods like yogurt, soups, ice cream, or soft-cooked eggs for the first 24-48 hours. Avoid foods that require hard chewing.
- Drink at least eight large glasses of water or fruit juice each day.

**In case of problems or if you have any questions, please call our office.**