

John L. Walker, D.D.S., J.D.

Memorial City Medical Plaza I
902 Frostwood, Suite 105
Houston, Texas 77024
713.465.6786 • 713.973.8078 (fax)
walkerddsjd@aol.com

Post Operative Care for Extractions

- The initial healing period typically takes from one to two weeks, gum tissue takes about 3-4 weeks to heal and complete healing of the bone can take about 6-8 months depending on your care of this area. Some discomfort, bleeding and swelling should be expected in the next 24 hours as your mouth heals. Following these simple instructions will normally be all that is needed.
- **DO NOT DISTURB THE WOUND:** The healing process begins immediately after the tooth is removed as your body sends blood to nourish the tooth socket. Simple pressure from a piece of gauze is usually all that is needed to control the bleeding and to help a blood clot to form in the socket. If sutures are used, they will need to be removed in 3-5 days. You will be given extra gauze to change the dressing every 30-40 minutes. Change the gauze only 3-4 times so as not to remove the blood clot. Fold gauze in half, and then in half again. You should now have a small square. Dampen the square with a small amount of water and place it on the extraction site and bite down firmly. It is normal for some blood to ooze from the area for several days. Remember, when blood mixes with saliva it appears like much more blood than it really is. If bleeding still continues, moisten a tea bag with water and wrap it in gauze and fold it in half and bite down on it for 30 minutes. Tea contains Tannic Acid, which may help to reduce the bleeding. You may want to use a towel on your pillow for a couple of nights.
- **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 to 24 hours. Apply alternately, 10-20 minutes on then 10-20 off for 6 hours or longer if necessary.
- **DO NOT SMOKE OR USE TOBACCO PRODUCTS** for at least 72 hours after the extraction. The smoke and pressure of smoking will interfere with the healing process, promote bleeding and can cause a very painful situation known as a "dry socket."
- **BRUSHING AND USING MOUTHWASH:** For several days after the extraction, it is important to keep the area as clean as possible to prevent infection and promote healing. Brush your teeth morning and night. Do not directly brush the extraction site for the first 3-4 days after the extraction to prevent dislodging of the blood clot. **DO NOT RINSE** for 24 hours after the extraction. After the first 24 hours you may begin rinsing gently, 4 times a day, using warm salt water (1 Tablespoon salt in 8oz of warm water).
- **MEDICATIONS:** If antibiotics are prescribed, please follow the directions on the bottle and take all of the medication prescribed. Some discomfort is normal after extractions. Analgesic tablets i.e. Tylenol, Motrin, Advil or Aleve are effective to take. Follow the directions stated on the bottle. The Doctor may have prescribed pain medication, to avoid nausea, do not take pain medications on an empty stomach. Do not drive or mix alcohol while taking pain medication.
- **SORE JAW:** Your jaw may be sore from holding your mouth open during the procedure. This may last 4-5 days. Massage the jaw muscles gently. Apply moist heat for 10 minutes and then off for 10 minutes. Eat soft foods and do not over extend opening your mouth. Use Analgesics as directed for discomfort.
- **DIET:** For the first 24-48 hours, you should maintain a diet of soft foods, such as Jell-O, pudding, yogurt, cream of wheat, mashed potatoes, soup, etc. Avoid food that crumbles, i.e. potato chips, cookies, crackers, popcorn, etc. Also avoid carbonated and hot beverages for 3-4 days. When the numbness has worn off you may eat yet be sure to chew on the opposite side for the first 24 hours. **DO NOT USE A STRAW** to drink through since it will dislodge the clot.
- **LONG TERM PROBLEMS:** You may have a numb, tingling feeling in the area for 4-6 weeks or longer. In most cases having a missing tooth can lead to several problems such as shifting teeth, difficulty chewing and malocclusion which could lead to TJM problems. This area will need to be restored with a fixed bridge, implant, a removable partial or a denture to insure good long-term dental health.

Please call the office if you experience excessive bleeding or swelling, persistent and severe pain, fever, or any reaction to medications.
