



Surgical Instructions

Teeth have to be removed for a variety of reasons, from accidents and disease to crowding in the mouth. When this happens, it's called a tooth extraction and involves dental surgery. As with all surgery, it's ideal for the patient to heal quickly, smoothly and with limited pain. But this can only be accomplished if the patient does his or her part by following appropriate aftercare instructions.

Bleeding and pain are two of the biggest possibilities after teeth extraction, so these instructions are geared toward preventing them. Our doctors are experienced with the healing process after a tooth extraction and know the best methods to ensure uncomplicated healing. It's important to follow their advice and be ready for aftercare before tooth extraction surgery.

Aftercare During the First 24 Hours

Appropriate aftercare for a tooth extraction depends on two time periods: the first 24 hours and afterwards. The former time period is when the area of the tooth extraction is most susceptible to pain or bleeding, so it's important to focus on clot control. The blood clot that forms on the area of the tooth extraction is what heals it, so it's important to apply pressure (via gauze your dentist will give you) and not disturb the clot.

Here are some do's and don'ts for the first 24 hours, according to organizations like the [American Dental Association \(ADA\)](#):

- DON'T drink through a straw.
- DO apply pressure with a cold cloth or ice bag if you experience swelling or bleeding. It's also advisable to contact your dentist if this happens.
- DON'T smoke, drink alcohol or rinse your mouth vigorously.
- DO follow the diet and/or instructions your dentist gave you.

After the first 24 hours has passed, you can focus on aftercare geared toward long-term healing and hopefully preparing for a dental implant.

Aftercare Beyond the First 24 Hours

Initial healing following a tooth extraction takes 2-3 weeks and complete healing can take up to six months, so aftercare is extremely valuable during this time. The most common instruction for this period is rinsing with mouthwash or warm salt water 3-4 times a day. You may experience pain, bits of bone making their way to the surface or stitches that won't dissolve, but this is normal and your dentist can address any concerns.

If you'd like to know more about tooth extraction aftercare, [call our office today](#).