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## **Tooth Extraction Post-Operative Instructions**

### **During the first 24 hours:**

**It is important that a blood clot forms** on the extraction site to stop bleeding, reduce pain, and speed healing. To protect the clot and avoid the pain of dry socket:

- Bite on a gauze pad firmly for 30-45 minutes. Blood and saliva mix in the mouth and make it look like there is more bleeding than there really is. Some oozing is normal; however, after 1 hour, repeat with a clean gauze pad if oozing is profuse.
- Do not smoke. Avoid tobacco for at least 72 hours because it slows healing.
- Do not rinse your mouth vigorously, or drink through a straw for 24 hours. These activities will disturb the healing blood clot.
- Do not drink hot, carbonated, or alcoholic drinks, and avoid hot or spicy foods.
- Limit yourself to calm activities and elevate your head with pillows when you lie down to reduce bleeding.

**To control discomfort**, take pain medication before the anesthetic has worn off or as recommended.

**To keep swelling to a minimum**, use an ice bag over the area, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off.

**When the numbness has worn off completely**, drink lots of fluids and eat only soft nutritious foods, chewing on the opposite side.

### **After the first 24 hours:**

**Begin to eat normally** as soon as it's comfortable.

**Resume brushing and flossing**, but clean gently around the site for about a week.

**If antibiotics were prescribed**, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

**Reduce soreness or swelling** by applying moist heat. Swelling usually starts to go down after 48 hours.

**Further reduce swelling** by rinsing your mouth very gently with warm salt water. Use about one teaspoon of salt per glass of warm water. Rinse two to three times a day for the week following the extraction.

### **When to call us:**

It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a tooth extraction, but call us right away if you have: heavy or increased bleeding, pain or swelling that increases or continues beyond two or three days or a reaction to the medication.