



# Healing after Extractions - It's all about The Clot!!

The healing process begins the moment a tooth is removed. After an extraction, the body sends blood to nourish the tooth socket and a blood clot is formed. This clot is an important part of the normal healing process. Within a day or two, soft tissue begins to fill in the opening and new bone tissue begins to grow in the socket. The instructions below are all designed to avoid activities that might disturb the clot and promote activities that will enhance the healing process and reduce discomfort.

## Healing Tips – DO.....

- Do keep gauze pack in place for 30 minutes after you leave the dental office. (Do not chew on the pack)
- Do follow the instructions below if there is bleeding/oozing after gauze pack is removed. (Could ooze for up to 24 hours) \*\*
- Do use extra care not to bite your cheek, lip or tongue while your mouth is numb. (Generally lasts a few hours)
- Do take over-the-counter or prescribed pain medication if needed for soreness or pain.
- Do take antibiotics as directed and **until gone**, if any were prescribed.
- Do apply cold compresses to face (over extraction area), if needed, to reduce swelling and discomfort during **first 24 hours**. (10 minutes on – 20 minutes off)
- Do apply moist heat to face (over extraction area) to reduce soreness or swelling, if needed **AFTER 24 hours**. (20 minutes on – 20 minutes off)
- Do drink lots of fluids after the bleeding stops. (Do not use a straw and do not swish)
- Do eat soft foods only for the rest of the day, after the bleeding stops. (Chew on the opposite side)
- Do **–AFTER 24 hours** – GENTLY rinse your mouth with warm salt water (1/2 tsp salt in 8 oz water) two to three times per day. (Don't use commercial mouthwash until healed)

## Healing Tips – DON'T.....

- Don't smoke for at least 24 hours (72 hours preferred). Inhaling creates suction and could loosen the clot & smoking slows healing.
- Don't drink through a straw for 24 hours. The suction could dislodge the clot and delay healing.
- Don't rinse your mouth vigorously for 24 hours to avoid dislodging the clot.
- Don't sneeze or cough hard, if possible..... this too can dislodge the clot.
- Don't drink hot, carbonated, or alcoholic drinks and avoid hot or spicy foods for 24 hours.
- Don't perform strenuous activity for 24 hours.....this helps to limit bleeding.
- Don't brush the teeth next to the healing tooth socket until the next day. This prevents dislodging the clot.



## **\*\*If bleeding continues when gauze pack is removed:**

1. **Lightly dampen** and fold a piece of clean gauze into a pad thick enough to bite on –place **damp** pad directly on the extraction site.
2. Apply moderate pressure by closing the teeth firmly over the damp pad & maintain this pressure for about 30 minutes.
3. If the pad becomes blood soaked, replace it with a clean/damp pad as necessary.

## When you should call us .....

If you experience heavy or excessive bleeding, persistent swelling beyond 3 days, severe pain or fever, or have reactions to the prescribed medications

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