

After Tooth Extraction

Extraction of a tooth is a traumatic procedure leaving a wound in the jaw-bone which takes time and care for proper healing. After the tooth has been completely removed, the dentist will place a piece of gauze over the socket and advise to close the jaws together. The resulting blood clot in the socket is nursed by following these instructions:

- The pressure over the gauze must be steady and constant for around 20 min. Avoid chewing on the gauze, talking or moving your jaws while the pressure is being applied.
- Remove the gauze and take appropriate painkillers with a cold sugar drink like juice or milkshake. Any prescribed antibiotics may be taken at this time.
- Replace a piece of gauze provided in the pack over the wound and apply pressure for another 15 min. This step may need to be repeated if bleeding persists.
- The day of surgery must be spent with none or minimal physical activities. These include excessive talking, moving, walking, lifting or any form of exercise. Light physical activities may be undertaken over the next couple of days.
- Rinsing or spitting must be avoided for the remainder of the day. This creates a negative pressure, which may disturb and damage the blood clot in the socket. Also avoid using a straw for drinks.
- The bleeding needs to stop and the numbness wear off before having a meal. The numbness can take 2 hours or more to wear off.
- Drinks for the rest of the day must be cold. Avoid hot or warm drinks like tea, coffee or soups as this may increase bleeding.
- Food for the rest of the day must be cold or room temperature. For example cool soft white-rice, cool piece of white bread, cool soft piece of chicken or fish, custards, yoghurts etc. Hot soft food and hot drinks may be consumed the next day. Food needs to be chewed on the opposite side for a couple of days.
- Appropriate painkillers should be used to avoid the expected inflammatory pain and discomfort. They may be taken every 4-6 hours for 3-5 days.
- Gentle rinsing with warm salt-water should be undertaken starting the next morning for 3-4 times in a day (after meals and before bed) over the next 4-5 days. This keeps the wound clean of plaque and food debris.
- The gauze packs must be used patiently and consistently to control bleeding. Ice-packs may be used over the skin and cold deserts consumed to help clotting of the blood. Blood-stained saliva is normal and may stain the linen.
- The practice must be contacted later in the day or the next day if there is any unusual excessive bleeding or pain.