

ARDEN HOUSE

What to do after an extraction.

You need to look after yourself carefully after you have had a tooth taken out, as with any operation to speed up healing and prevent infection.

General Advice

- For the rest of the day, don't drink alcohol, eat hot food or disturb the clot, which will have formed in the space left by the tooth, because this may cause the socket to start bleeding again.
- Don't smoke, and avoid strenuous exercise for the rest of the day.
- Don't rinse your mouth for the rest of the day after the extraction.
- From the following day, rinse gently with warm, salty water to keep the socket clean and continue to do this for up to a week after meals and before bed. Use half a teaspoon of salt in a glass of comfortably warm water.
- Brush your teeth normally with toothpaste to keep the whole mouth clean but be gentle in the region where the tooth was extracted.
- If you feel small pieces of bones working their way out of the socket, don't worry, this is normal.
- Some swelling or discomfort in the first two or three days is also normal.
- Take painkillers if you need them (as you would for a headache). Ask us if you are not sure what to take.

If the bleeding does not stop

- In our post extraction pack, you should find a small supply of gauze in case the bleeding continues. A clean cotton handkerchief will also work, but not paper tissues. It is the effect of pressure from the gauze or handkerchief that prevents bleeding, which is why a tissue will not work.
- Roll some small firm pads about one centimetre by three centimetres – a size that will fit over the socket.
- Keep sitting up and gently clear away any clots of blood around the socket with the gauze or handkerchief.
- Place a pad across the socket from the tongue side to the cheek and bite firmly on it for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Take off the pad and check whether the bleeding has stopped. If it hasn't, use a fresh pad. If the pocket is still bleeding, let us know.
- Local anaesthetic will have been used during your treatment and as a result you will have a numb or tingling sensation in the surrounding area for several hours afterwards. Be careful to avoid biting your lip or tongue and avoid hot food & liquids until normal sensation returns.
- Some extractions carry the temporary or even permanent risk of loss or altered sensation. If particularly applicable, this will have been discussed with you before your treatment.

Dry sockets

Occasionally after extraction of a tooth, the blood clot in the socket can break down, leaving a painful empty hole in the gum. This is called “dry socket”. If the socket becomes painful a day or two after the extraction, then this is usually the reason. If it happens, you will need to come back to see your dentist to have the wound cleaned and packed with a dressing. This will relieve the pain and reduce the risk of infection.

If you follow these instructions, your mouth should heal normally, without becoming infected. But if anything in your mouth worries you, phone us for advice.