

If you've had a tooth extracted, there are a few steps you need to take to ensure a speedy recovery. Be sure to carefully adhere to the following homecare instructions after your procedure.

Immediately After Your Procedure

After any procedure in which an anesthetic is administered, it is important to have a family member or friend present to drive you home safely after your treatment. Once you've gotten home safely, we recommend that you avoid talking or any activity for the remainder of the day, as you should be taking this time to rest. After your procedure, your dentist will have placed gauze over the extraction sites. You should try to keep these there for the first hour if possible. (That said, if you experience heavy bleeding, the gauze can be swapped out with new ones.) Once the first hour has passed, you can replace this with fresh gauze and keep it there for another 30-60 minutes, continually applying gentle, but firm pressure. If you experience any nausea during this period, you can try sipping on flat cola (such as Pepsi) to settle your stomach.

Extraction Site

Once the bleeding has stopped, be certain to avoid touching or disturbing your extraction site for the next few days. This is a critical period of the healing process, as this is when your blood clot is forming. Therefore, you'll want to avoid any activities that can interrupt this process. Do not drink from straws, smoke cigarettes, play wind instruments, or even whistle during this period. You may even want to skip cleaning your teeth during the first 24 hours. Otherwise, you may put yourself at risk for a painful condition known as dry socket, in which the blood clot is dislodged and the nerve endings are exposed.

Diet

For the first day of your recovery, it is important that you forgo any solid, spicy, or hot foods that could disturb your extraction site. This is particularly important for foods that could get stuck in your surgical site like popcorn or seeds. That said, it is important that

this temporary change in diet does not impact your nutrition intake, as being healthy is vital to your healing process. Try to eat soft, healthy foods like yogurt, mashed potatoes, soup, and smoothies. You can resume your normal diet once you feel comfortable.

Pain/Swelling Management

It is normal to experience some swelling and tenderness for the first 48 hours after a tooth extraction. Over-the-counter pain medication is typically sufficient enough to manage this pain. Be sure to take this medication as directed. That said, you will want to avoid aspirin as this is a blood thinner— take ibuprofen instead. To help manage the swelling, hold an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas to the cheek outside of your extraction site for 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off in 1-2 hour time periods. If your pain or swelling does not subside after the first 2-3 days, be sure to call TruBlu Dentistry to discuss your symptoms.

Bleeding

As mentioned above, you will need to replace your gauze after the first hour after your procedure, applying firm but gentle pressure to the extraction site. If the bleeding persists slightly after the first hour, don't worry. This is normal. You might consider placing a moist tea bag on the site for 30-60 minutes. Just soak the teabag in hot water, wring out the excess water, wrap it in a thin layer of gauze and apply to the site. Be certain to avoid heavy physical activity that could increase your blood pressure and promote further bleeding.

Dental Hygiene

In the first 24 hours, you may want to skip brushing to allow your extraction site to heal. Instead, you can try gently rinsing with a warm saline mixture (add a teaspoon of salt to a cup of warm water) to keep the site clean. The day after your surgery, however, it is important that you keep your mouth very clean with regular brushing and flossing. This will help you to avoid infection.

Physical Activity

It is important to rest after your tooth extraction. Therefore, you should not do any physical activity for the first 24 hours. Instead, be sure to lay with your head slightly propped up on a pillow.

Do you have any questions about your healing process? We're happy to help. Call TruBlu Dentistry today to discuss your symptoms!