

Rachel Brinker, DMD

Periodontics and Implantology

After Tooth Extractions

There are a number of reasons that your dentist might recommend a tooth extraction. Some dental patients suffer from tooth decay; others need to remove teeth hindering orthodontic treatment, whereas various patients simply need wisdom teeth removal. While a tooth extraction can be a serious dental procedure, aftercare is just as critical as the procedure itself. As the dental patient, it is important to understand that pain and the risk of infection can be lessened with proper care.

Care immediately following surgery:

- Keep pressure on the gauze pad that your doctor placed over the surgical area by gently biting down. Dampen the gauze sponge with water if it begins to dry out. Try to maintain constant pressure in intervals of 45-60 minutes, repeating as often as needed, or until bleeding lessens. Change the gauze as needed.
- Keep your head elevated and try to lower your activity level as much as possible.
- 48 hours after surgery, rinse mouth with warm salt-water every 1-2 hours. Avoid using any mouthwash containing alcohol as it can irritate the wound.
- Keep your mouth clean by brushing areas around the surgical site but be sure to avoid sutures. Touching the wounded area in any fashion should be prevented.
- Use ice packs to control swelling by placing them on facial areas near extraction.
- Take all prescribed medications accordingly. If any itching or swelling occurs, contact the practice immediately or go to the nearest emergency room.
- Try to eat softer foods preferably high in protein.
- Keep your body hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids, but do not drink through a straw for the next 5-7 days.
- If you are a regular tobacco user refrain from smoking for the next 3-4 days as smoking increases your chances of getting a dry socket as well as an infection.

After your tooth has been extracted, healing will take some time. Within 3 to 14 days, your sutures should fall out or dissolve. For sutures that are non-resorbable, your doctor will schedule a follow-up appointment to remove the stitches for you. Your tooth's empty socket will gradually fill in with bone over time and smooth over with adjacent tissues.

Office: (415) 389-9600

Shelter Bay Office Complex - South Building - Suite 110 - 655 Redwood Hwy., Mill Valley, CA 94941