

Discharge advice following dental extractions



Information for patients Community and Special Care Dentistry

It is important that you look after yourself following a tooth extraction. This will help to speed up the healing process and prevent infection.

Is there anything I should avoid on the day of the extraction?

If you have had a local anaesthetic (injection) make sure that you:

- Do not bite your lips, tongue or cheek.
- Do not have any food or drink that is too hot until the numbness wears off. This may take up to 2 hours.

You should also:

- Avoid vigorous exercise, alcohol and smoking for the rest of the day.
- Avoid rinsing your mouth for the rest of the day.

What about cleaning my teeth?

It is important that you continue to maintain good oral hygiene so you should brush your remaining teeth as normal.

How do I care for my mouth whilst it is healing?

The following day rinse gently with warm salty water to keep the socket clean. Continue to do this for up to a week after meals and before bed.

Use half a teaspoonful of salt in a glass of comfortably warm water (i.e. a temperature that you can comfortably keep your finger in).



What do I do if the bleeding does not stop?

Your dentist may have given you a small supply of gauze in case this happens. If not, clean cotton handkerchiefs will do, but not paper tissue.

1. Roll some small firm pads to a size that will fit over the socket.
2. Keep sitting up and gently clear away any clots of blood around the socket with the gauze or handkerchief.
3. Place a pad across the socket from the tongue side to the cheek and bite/or press firmly on it for 10 to 15 minutes. Use a clock to time this.
4. Take off the pad and check whether the bleeding has stopped. If it hasn't, use a fresh pad.

If the socket is still bleeding, contact your dentist.

Can I take any painkillers?

If you are feeling any discomfort you can take painkillers as you would for a headache. We recommend Paracetamol if you are able to take it.

You should avoid tablets containing aspirin and in all cases follow the instructions on the packet carefully.

What should I do if I think there is a problem?

If there is persistent pain, swelling or bleeding that cannot be controlled, contact the dental clinic.

In an emergency, outside clinic hours (i.e. weekends or before 9.00 am or after 4.45 pm, Monday to Friday), you should ring NHS **111** for advice.

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 increasingly painful 2 to 3 days after the extraction, this is usually the reason.

If this happens, you should contact your dentist who will arrange for you to have the wound cleaned and packed with a dressing; this will relieve the pain and reduce the risk of infection.



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