

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER RESTORATIVE TREATMENT  
(POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER TOOTH EXTRACTION)**

Tooth extraction is a surgical procedure. Therefore, it is natural that temporary changes will occur in the mouth afterward. You will be functioning normally within a few days. In the meantime, you should follow a few simple rules to help promote healing, prevent complications, and make yourself more comfortable. Your mouth will still be numb for a few hours after the extraction so you will want to be careful not to bite your cheek, lip or tongue. After an extraction, it is important to allow a blood clot to form to stop the bleeding and begin the healing process. This is why we ask you to bite on a gauze pad for 30 to 45 minutes after the procedure.

If bleeding or oozing continues after you remove the gauze pad, place another gauze pad and bite firmly for another thirty minutes. You may have to do this several times. After the blood clot forms, it is important to protect it, especially for the next 24 hours. Do not smoke, suck through a straw, rinse your mouth vigorously, or clean the teeth next to the extraction site. These activities will dislodge the clot and slow down healing. Limit yourself to calm activities for the first 24 hours. This keeps your blood pressure lower, reduces bleeding and helps the healing process. After the tooth is extracted, you may feel some pain and have some swelling. You can use an ice bag to keep this to a minimum. The swelling usually starts to go down after 48 hours. Use pain medication only as directed, and call the office if it does not seem to be working. If antibiotics are prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

Drink lots of fluids and eat only soft nutritious foods on the day of the extraction. Don't use alcoholic beverages and avoid hot and spicy foods. You can begin eating normally the next day, or as soon as it is comfortable. Gently rinse your mouth with salt water three times a day (mix one teaspoon of salt in one cup of warm water, rinse-swish-spit). Also, rinse gently after meals-it helps to keep food out of the extraction site. It is very important to resume your normal dental routine after 24 hours, which should include brushing your teeth and tongue and flossing at least once a day. This speeds healing and helps keep your breath and mouth fresh. Call the office right away at 310.275.1399 if you have heavy bleeding, severe pain, continued swelling after two or three days, or a reaction to the medication. After a few days you will be feeling fine and can resume your normal activities.