



EXTRACTIONS

When you have had a dental extraction it is important to look after the area correctly. The blood clot that forms in the socket provides the “scaffold” for the healing bone and gum and is particularly fragile for the first few days. Loss or damage of the clot can lead to complications during the early healing phase and a condition called a “dry socket” which can be painful and need further treatment.

Q I've had my tooth out – what should I do now?

A Take it easy for the rest of the day. You should avoid any exercise or strenuous activity for the first 48 hours and generally rest as much as you can.

Q What precautions should I take?

A Avoid eating or drinking anything for the first 2 hours and then also avoid eating on the side of the extraction for the first 2 days. You should avoid drinking alcohol for the first 24 hours as this can affect the healing.

It is a good idea to avoid hot food or drinks until the anaesthetic wears off to prevent scalding the numb part of your mouth. Also be careful not to chew your cheek or lip. This is quite a common problem which can happen when there is no feeling.

When you rest and sleep, try to keep your head slightly elevated for the first night using an extra pillow if possible. It is also a good idea to use an old pillowcase, or put a towel on the pillow, in case you bleed a little.

Q Should I rinse my mouth out?

A Do not rinse your mouth at all for the first 24 hours. It is important to allow the socket to heal and to avoid damaging the delicate blood clot. You should begin rinsing your mouth out after 24 hours using an antiseptic mouthwash (warm salt water can be used as an alternative).

To begin with you should just aim to gently bathe the area – vigorous rinsing should be avoided for the first 24 hours. Rinsing should be carried out following meals (after the initial 24 hours) and continued for a week.

Q When should I brush?

A It is as important to keep your mouth clean after an extraction. You should brush your teeth as usual however you need to be careful around the extraction site to avoid disturbing the blood clot.

Please turn over

Q What do I do if it bleeds?

A There will probably be some slight bleeding for the first day or so. Many people are concerned about this, but when mixed with saliva it can often look worse than it really is.

Remember, it is important to appreciate that if you are taking “blood thinning” medications (including aspirin), you should expect to possibly bleed a little more after surgery. This will also tend to lead to more swelling and bruising but is normal under the circumstances.

If you do notice significant bleeding, remove any denture, spit out any clots and apply pressure to the socket by biting firmly on a folded piece of clean cotton material such as a handkerchief or piece of gauze for at least 30 minutes. Make sure this is placed directly over the extraction site and that the pad is replaced if necessary.

If the bleeding has not stopped after an hour or two, phone the contact numbers detailed below.

Q How soon can I smoke?

A We recommend that you avoid smoking for as long as you can after an extraction, but this should be at least for the rest of the day.

Q I am in pain, what should I take?

A There will usually be some tenderness in the area for the first few days and in most cases simple pain relief is enough to ease the discomfort. Take what you would normally take for a headache, but always follow the manufacturer’s instructions and if in doubt check with your doctor first. Do not take aspirin, as this can make you more likely to start bleeding again.

Q I am still in pain, what could it be?

A Sometimes the blood clot can be lost from the socket, which can become quite painful after about 3 or 4 days. In this case, it is important to see your dentist or contact the clinic, so that we can place a dressing into the socket.

You may also feel the sharp edge of the socket with your tongue and sometimes small pieces of bone may work their way to the surface of the socket. This is normal but you should contact the clinic if the problem persists.

If you have any problems, please contact Blackhills Clinic:
01764 664446

Out-of-hours number: 07958102537
(Evenings: Mon-Thur 5.00p.m-8.30a.m.
Weekends: Fri 5.00p.m. to Mon 08.30a.m.)