

Tooth Extraction Aftercare

Do's and Don'ts for a Smooth Recovery

Most extraction recoveries go smoothly as long as you follow a handful of key rules, especially in the first 24-48 hours, when the site is most vulnerable.

The First 24 Hours

- Bite gently on the gauze provided for 30-45 minutes to help a blood clot form — protecting this clot is priority one.
- Avoid rinsing, spitting forcefully, using a straw, or smoking — any of these can dislodge the clot before it's stable.
- Stick to cool, soft foods and avoid chewing near the extraction site.

Days 2 Through 7

- Starting the day after extraction, gently rinse with warm salt water to keep the area clean (still avoid vigorous rinsing or spitting).
- Gradually reintroduce normal foods as comfort allows, favoring the opposite side of your mouth.
- Mild swelling and soreness in the first couple of days is normal and should improve steadily from there.

Dry Socket Warning Signs

Dry socket happens when the protective blood clot is lost before the site has healed, exposing the bone underneath. The telltale sign is a sudden increase in pain roughly one to five days after the extraction — often radiating toward the ear, eye, or temple — sometimes with visible bone at the site or a bad taste or odor. It's most common after lower wisdom tooth extractions but can happen with any extraction.

■ Call us if you notice

Pain that gets sharply worse rather than better a few days in.

A fever, ongoing bleeding, or visible pus.