

Advice after tooth extraction

Information for patients

Please read through all of this advice leaflet.

It describes how your mouth should heal after your treatment today and what you can do to help this process.

After the extraction of a tooth, it is normal for the wound to bleed for several minutes.

This bleeding will stop, and a blood clot will form to fill the space where the tooth was removed. In a few days, a surface skin will form over this as the area heals. It is important to look after the area as carefully as possible to allow this to happen.

When bleeding stops after an extraction, there is often still a little blood staining in the saliva and there might be a slight taste of blood. This is normal.

If you find that there is a lot of bleeding or that blood clots are coming away from the wound, applying pressure can usually stop this. Make a small pad from a clean handkerchief or piece of gauze and dampen it in clean cold water. Place it over the wound and bite hard for at least 10 minutes, while sitting quietly.

If the bleeding doesn't stop, then replace the pressure pad and contact the dental clinic where the tooth was extracted.

Some dos and don'ts

- ✓ Try not to disturb the wound with your finger or tongue. Rinsing your mouth too soon after an extraction could slow the healing of the wound, so please avoid rinsing or spitting for the rest of the day.
- ✓ Choose only soft foods to eat during the first 24 hours after the extraction. If you need to clean your mouth after eating, please do so gently and as little as possible during this period, by rinsing briefly with warm water which has already been boiled.
- ✓ It is best to avoid very hot drinks or alcohol for the rest of the day. Either of these could make the bleeding start again.
- ✓ The local anaesthetic which was used to make your tooth numb before the extraction may take a while to wear off. Be careful not to bite lips or cheeks that have also become numb as this could cause a painful ulcer to form.
- ✓ Exercise makes blood pressure rise and therefore could also start the bleeding again. It is better to avoid exercise on the day of an extraction. If you lie down, use an extra pillow to raise your head which will also reduce the risk of bleeding.

...to help your mouth heal

- ✓ Smoking after extraction of a tooth affects how well the wound in your mouth will heal and is the usual reason for patients having very painful complications. It is best to avoid smoking for the first 24-hour period after an extraction, at least. If this is not possible, you should not smoke for a minimum of 6 hours and, if you have decided to start again, try to smoke as little as possible.
- ✓ It is normal to have some mild pain and swelling after an extraction. This can usually be controlled with a painkiller such as Ibuprofen or Paracetamol. Follow the advice on the packet or bottle so that you take the correct dosage.
- ✓ If any pain or swelling becomes worse after 2-3 days, you should contact the dental clinic. This may be due to an infection, which can be treated very simply.
- ✓ Brush your teeth as normal but take care around the area of the extraction.
- ✓ Once 24 hours have passed, it is safe to rinse your mouth after eating, with warm water which has already been boiled, or with a dental mouthwash.

Spittal Street Clinic

Spittal Street Dental clinic is open on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9am until 4pm. Please phone for advice during these times if you have any problems. The drop-in is open from 12.30pm – please come early to attend this.

When Spittal Street Dental clinic is closed, please contact Chalmers Dental Centre on 0131 537 8800 Monday – Friday from 9am until 4pm for dental emergencies.

Urgent dental advice can also be obtained by phoning NHS 24 on 111 which operates Monday to Thursday from 6pm – 9am and from Friday 6pm until Monday 9am.