

Advice on extractions

After you have had a tooth taken out you will be asked to bite on a small piece of gauze. This will help to stop the bleeding. Please keep biting on the gauze for about half an hour. Then you can remove it and throw it away.

★*What you should do to prevent further bleeding & avoid infection:*

- ★Don't over exert yourself for 24 hours – by lifting heavy weights or exercising, for example.
- ★Don't smoke for as long as possible – at least a few hours.
- ★Don't drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- ★Don't lie down for at least 2 hours - when you do go to bed on the first night, use an extra pillow to elevate your head.
- ★Don't eat for at least a few hours. When you do, have something light like soup. If you still feel numb, be careful not to bite or burn your tongue, lip or cheek. For a few days, try to avoid eating on the side where the tooth was.
- ★Don't wash your mouth out until the day after the extraction. Then, rinse your mouth out *gently* with hot salt water. Use about 1 teaspoon of salt dissolved in a cup of hot water. The water should be as hot as you feel comfortable with. Be very careful not to burn your mouth – if the water is too hot to dip your finger in, let it cool or add some cold to it. Repeat this process after every meal and before going to bed. Keep doing it for at least a week.
 - ★ You may be tempted to put your fingers or tongue in the area where the tooth was because your mouth will feel different. You may feel a sharp edge to the socket and occasionally small fragments of bone may work their way out. This is quite normal and you must resist the temptation to touch the socket. If you do, you might disturb the blood clot, causing further bleeding and delay to the healing process.

★*What you should do if you start to bleed again:*

It is quite common to start bleeding again after a tooth has been extracted. If you do start to bleed again:

- ★Keep sitting up.
- ★We will have given you some gauze to take home with you - use a piece of this to clear away loose blood clots from the socket.

★ Roll up 2 or 3 pieces of gauze together, place them in the area where the tooth was and bite hard for at least 30 minutes. The roll of gauze must be big enough so that when you bite on it, you can feel pressure being applied to the socket. Place it across the socket from the tongue side to the cheek side. If the socket is between 2 teeth, squeeze the gauze so that it slots in between them – the pressure must be applied to the socket itself.

★ Remove the gauze after 30 minutes. If you are still bleeding, repeat the process.

★ ***What you should do if you feel pain:***

It is not unusual to experience swelling or discomfort for a few days. If you are in pain you can take painkillers. Be sure to follow the directions on the packaging. If the pain continues for more than three days, contact your dentist for advice.

★ ***What you should do if you had a denture fitted after your extraction:***

The denture will feel strange at first and, most probably, loose. This is caused by swelling of the gums after the anaesthetic injections. The denture will probably need to be adjusted but this is best done a few days later when the swelling has gone down and things have settled in. In the meantime:

★ Keep the denture in – this helps to stop the bleeding and to shape the gums.

★ Wear the denture on the first night, if you can – this will aid healing.

★ The next morning, take the denture out, rinse it in cold water and replace it.

★ If you really can't cope with the discomfort, take the denture out for a while. Wash it, wrap it in damp tissue and put it in a sealed plastic bag. This keeps the denture moist – if you let it dry out it may warp and will have to be remade.

If you continue to have difficulty, contact your dentist for advice. If bleeding persists for more than 4 hours, contact your dentist for advice (call 02-27718739 or 02-27718151 ext. 2631; out-of-hours, call the Taiwan Adventist Hospital emergency helpline on 02-27718151 ext. 2756).