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Tooth extraction involves trauma to gum tissues and bone. The care that the surgical area receives following the extraction is of great importance to the healing process. With proper care, the area will heal with minimal discomfort and inconvenience to the patient.

CARE OF THE SURGICAL SITE

Although some slight bleeding for up to 24 hours following an extraction is normal, the following instructions will minimize this bleeding and accelerate healing.

- 1) You have been given gauze pads to apply to the socket. Place the pad over the socket. Then bite down, pressing the pad firmly against the wound. The pads should be changed every 15 minutes to 30 minutes and should be applied continuously 2 to 4 hours following the extraction. If you are biting down properly and applying firm pressure, the pad will be held in place and in direct contact with the socket. If bleeding still persists, a moistened tea bag should be used in place of the gauze pads. If bleeding is still heavy after these measures, the office should be contacted.
- 2) Cold packs (crushed ice in baggies works well) should be held against the face in the area of the surgery. Apply packs for 15 minutes and remove them for 15 minutes. Continue this cycle for 2 to 3 hours.
- 3) Diet for the first 24 hours should be light and at a moderate temperature. Cottage cheese, jello and scrambled eggs are typical good choices.
- 4) **DO NOT** rinse or spit for the first 24 hours. After this interval of time, gentle rinsing with a solution of 1 teaspoon of salt in tepid water will be helpful. Good oral hygiene should be practiced, but use special care near the surgical site.
- 5) Physical activity for the first day should be reduced to very light activities. Vigorous activity will dislodge the clot and cause additional bleeding.

PAIN CONTROL

Some discomfort is to be expected following any surgery. If you have been given a prescription for pain medication, have it filled so that you are prepared to begin taking it before the anesthetic loses its effect. If you have no prescription, take 2 non-aspirin (tylenol, advil, etc) pain pills every 4 hours for pain control. When taking this pain medication, it is important to have some food in your stomach.

By the second or third day, you should be free of any significant discomfort; if not, call the office. If the pain increases on the third or fourth day, an infection may be starting and interfering with proper healing. The office should be contacted immediately.