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DENTAL ASSOCIATION

*Patient Education
Information
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**Post operative
instructions
following
dental
extraction**

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After a dental extraction, following the correct post-op instructions is essential for proper healing and to avoid complications. Here are some general post-operative care instructions to follow:

Control Bleeding

- Bite gently on the gauze or cotton pad placed over the extraction site for 30 to 45 minutes to help control bleeding.
- After removing the gauze, if the bleeding continues, replace the gauze and apply gentle pressure for another 30 minutes.
- Avoid excessive spitting, as this can dislodge the blood clot and delay healing.
- Do not rinse or gargle the mouth for the first 24 hours following the extraction.
- Avoid poking the wound with your tongue or finger.
- Avoid smoking and vaping for as long as possible or for at least the two days following the extraction. Smoking and vaping will dramatically increase the risk of poor healing, leading to infection.
- If bleeding doesn't stop after a few hours, contact your dentist.

Pain Management

- Take the prescribed or recommended pain medications as directed. Over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen (Mybulen; Myprodol) may also help reduce pain and swelling. Avoid Aspirin (Disprin, Grandpa) as this will exacerbate bleeding.
- If you were prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed and finish the entire prescription to prevent infection.
- If there is a sudden increase in pain after a few days or if the pain is unbearable, contact your dentist immediately.

Swelling and Bruising

- If swelling occurs, apply an ice pack to the outside of your face near the extraction site for 10-20 minutes during the first 24 hours.
- Swelling and bruising are common and may last for a few days.
- After the first 24 hours, you can switch to warm compresses if needed.

Diet and Hydration

- Stick to a soft diet (e.g., yogurt, mashed potatoes, soups) for the first few days.
- Avoid hot, spicy, or crunchy foods that may irritate the extraction site.
- Avoid drinking through a straw for at least a few days, as the suction can dislodge the blood clot and cause a painful condition called dry socket.
- Stay hydrated but avoid alcoholic beverages and caffeinated drinks in the initial healing period.

Oral Hygiene

- Avoid brushing or flossing the extraction site for the first 24 hours.
- After 24 hours, gently rinse your mouth with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon salt in a cup of warm water) to help keep the area clean. Do this 2-3 times a day, especially after meals.
- Brush and floss the rest of your teeth gently, but avoid disturbing the extraction site.
- Avoid using mouthwash with alcohol, as it can irritate the area.

Rest and Activity

- Rest for the first 24-48 hours and avoid strenuous activity. Physical exertion can increase swelling and bleeding.
- Keep your head elevated when lying down to reduce swelling.

Stitches

- If you have stitches (sutures) in your mouth, these are normally the dissolving type and will disappear after a period of 7-10 days.

Monitor for Complications

- Watch for signs of infection, including severe pain, swelling, fever, or pus discharge from the extraction site. If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your dentist immediately.
- If you experience persistent or severe pain, contact your dentist as it could be a sign of dry socket or infection.

Follow-up Appointments

- Be sure to attend any follow-up appointments scheduled with your dentist. These are typically a week or two after the procedure to ensure proper healing and remove stitches if necessary.

If you have any specific questions or concerns, or if you're unsure about any aspect of the healing process, don't hesitate to contact your dentist.