

Tooth extraction

Cork Emergency Department (www.EMed.ie)

Cork University Dental Hospital

After a tooth extraction

Your mouth will be numb for 3-4 hours. Do not have anything hot to eat or drink while your mouth is numb as you may burn yourself. Be careful not to accidentally bite your lip or cheek. Do **not** stick your tongue in the socket or rinse your mouth vigorously for the first 24 hours. This will disturb the blood clot which the socket needs in order to heal. After the first 24 hours you can start to rinse gently either with warm salt water or with a mouth wash if one is prescribed by your dentist. Brush gently but avoid the tooth socket until it is comfortable. Keep your mouth as clean as possible- this helps healing. You may eat or drink after your extraction but stick to soft foods which are comfortable to eat. A certain amount of pain, bleeding and swelling is normal after you have a tooth extracted. Following the instructions below will help reduce your discomfort to a minimum.

To control bleeding:

Some oozing from the socket is common in the first 24 hours. This is usually easily controlled by biting on damp gauze pads which you will be given to take home with you. If the socket is bleeding you should bite down on the gauze pad for 30 minutes before you recheck the socket. This may need to be repeated.

To control pain:

Taking a pain killer regularly in order to keep pain at bay is much more effective than waiting until the pain is severe. If you have not been given a prescription then Paracetamol should be effective.

To minimize swelling:

If you take your pain killers regularly this will help to keep the swelling down. An ice pack can be used in the first 24 hours. Make sure it is wrapped up and applied to your face for 15 minutes at a time every few hours.

No smoking:

Smoking interferes with healing of the socket and triggers bleeding and a dry socket.

Dry socket:

Sometimes a socket becomes more painful a few days after the extraction. A dry socket needs treatment to reduce pain. Dry sockets are more common in people who smoke and in women who take the contraceptive pill.

If you have any problems contact the clinic where the tooth was extracted, or if before 5pm at the Oral Surgery Department of Cork School & Dental Hospital, 021 4545100, or after 5 pm the on-call dentist at the Emergency Department of Cork University Hospital, 021 4546400.