Dental Extraction

Teeth are pulled for many different reasons. Tooth decay, infections, and dental fractures may require dental extraction to relieve symptoms. **Special care is needed after a tooth is pulled in order to prevent bleeding, pain, and infection.** Usually, your jaw is numbed when a tooth is pulled. It is important to protect the area, even if there is no pain at first. In most extractions, a small amount of bleeding is normal. Sometimes stitches are put in to help the gum heal.

To reduce the risk of bleeding, do not smoke or drink through a straw for several days. Avoid rinsing your mouth out too vigorously. This can also break up the clot down at the bottom of the socket. Apply ice packs to the jaw frequently to control swelling and pain for the next 2 days. You can brush your other teeth. Do not brush or floss near the tooth socket. Pain medicine may be needed. Antibiotics may also be prescribed if there is an abscess or increased risk of infection. **If your gum tissue bleeds heavily, fold a clean cloth or piece of gauze and place it on the bleeding gum.** Bite on this for 20 minutes.

The pain and swelling should be much better in 3 days. Until your gum has healed, eat a soft diet and avoid hot drinks and spicy foods. After meals, you can gently rinse your mouth out with warm salt water.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have uncontrolled bleeding, marked swelling, or severe pain.
- You develop a fever, difficulty swallowing, or other severe symptoms.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
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