

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

# After a Tooth Extraction

Healing the socket & protecting the blood clot

A blood clot forms in the socket to begin healing — protecting it for the first 24 hours is the single most important thing you can do. Some bleeding, swelling, and tenderness are completely normal in the first day or two.

**✓ Do**

- ✓ Bite firmly on the gauze for 30–45 minutes; replace it if it soaks through.
- ✓ Rest with your head elevated for the rest of the day.
- ✓ Apply an ice pack to the cheek, 15 minutes on / 15 off, for the first 24 hours.
- ✓ Eat soft, cool foods (yogurt, smoothies, soup) and stay hydrated.
- ✓ After 24 hours, rinse gently with warm salt water ( $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt in a cup of water) a few times a day, especially after meals.
- ✓ Take any prescribed medication as directed, and finish all antibiotics.

**✗ Avoid (first 24–48 hrs)**

- ✗ No drinking straws, spitting, or vigorous rinsing — suction can dislodge the clot.
- ✗ No smoking or vaping (greatly raises the risk of a painful dry socket).
- ✗ No strenuous activity or heavy lifting.
- ✗ Skip alcohol, hot drinks, and crunchy or chewy foods.
- ✗ Don't poke the site with your tongue, fingers, or a toothbrush.

**📞 Call us if...**

Bleeding is heavy and won't slow after several hours of pressure · pain worsens around day 3–4 (a sign of dry socket) · swelling increases after 3 days · you develop a fever, or notice pus or a bad taste · numbness that doesn't fade.