FREE PRINTABLE GUIDE · 2026–2027 EDITION

Your recovery after a tooth extraction

What to expect day by day, what to eat and when to call us

The essentials

1. For the first 24 hours, protect the blood clot: gauze, cold, no suction and no tobacco.
2. Discomfort eases a little more each day. The site usually closes in 1 to 2 weeks.
3. If the pain gets worse instead of better, or you have a fever, call us. If it is hard to breathe or swallow, call 911.

The 5 rules for the first 24 hours

1. **Bite on the gauze.** Firm pressure with damp gauze slows the bleeding and helps the clot form.
2. **Cold on the outside.** A cold pack on your cheek, 10 to 20 minutes at a time, always wrapped in a cloth.
3. **No suction.** Do not use a straw or spit hard: it can dislodge the clot.
4. **No tobacco.** Do not smoke or vape. Smoking is the clearest risk factor for dry socket.
5. **Soft and lukewarm.** Chew on the other side, with soft, lukewarm foods. Nothing hard or crunchy.

What will you feel?

The numbness lasts a few hours, often 2 or 3: be careful not to bite your lip or cheek. Some swelling and discomfort in the first days is normal.

For pain, most people only need what their dentist recommends, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Always take it as directed.

Day by day

First hours	Keep firm pressure on the gauze and change it if it soaks through. Rest and avoid effort.
First day	Do not rinse or spit hard, do not use a straw and do not smoke. Cold for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Soft, lukewarm meals.
Days 2 and 3	Some swelling and discomfort is normal. Gently brush your other teeth without touching the site. Avoid hard exercise.
Days 3 to 7	The pain should ease each day. From day 3 you can rinse gently, with warm salt water if you were told to. Nothing hard for a week.
Second week	Slowly go back to your usual diet. If you had stitches, they may loosen: that is normal. Go to your follow-up if you have one.

Tip: keep this guide on the fridge or next to your medications.

What to eat?

Yes, from day one

Yogurt, mashed potatoes, lukewarm soups, avocado, ripe banana, oatmeal, scrambled eggs and smoothies with a spoon.

Better wait

Very hot drinks on the first day. Alcohol while you take medications.

Avoid for a week

Hard and crunchy foods: nuts, peanuts, pork rinds, fried plantains, toast, seeds and popcorn.

Safe hygiene

- Brush and floss your other teeth from the next day, or when your dentist tells you.
- Do not touch the site with your toothbrush or tongue for at least 3 days.
- Rinse and spit gently starting on day 3.
- If your dentist gives you a special rinse, use it as explained.

Medications and rest

- Take your medications exactly as directed. If you were prescribed an antibiotic, finish it.
- If you take blood thinners or other medications that affect clotting, say so before the extraction.
- Avoid hard physical activity for the first few days.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication or antibiotics.

Dry socket: how to spot it

It happens when the clot is lost and the bone is exposed. It hurts, but it has a simple in-office treatment. Watch for:

- Strong pain that starts 1 to 3 days later, instead of easing.
- Pain that spreads to the ear, temple or neck on the same side.
- A bad taste or bad smell in the mouth.

Call us at (305) 787-3642 if you notice

- Fever or chills
- Swelling that keeps growing, or pus at the site
- Heavy bleeding that does not stop after a few hours
- Pain that gets worse day by day

Call 911 if it is hard to breathe or swallow.

Sources: MedlinePlus, *Tooth extraction* and *Dry socket* (2024); ADA guideline for acute dental pain (Carrasco-Labra et al., *JADA* 2024); NIDCR, *Opioids and Dental Pain*; Cochrane, Daly et al. 2022; Kolokythas et al., *Int J Dent* 2010. Accessed October 2026.

General educational information. It does not replace a dental exam or your dentist's instructions. Results, risks and costs vary for each person.

Need help in another language? It is free: call (305) 787-3642. PureSmile Miami does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

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