

What to Expect after a Tooth Extraction

Recovery and Outlook

How long does it take to recover from a tooth extraction?

It depends on the complexity of your case. However, most people feel back to normal in just a few days. While you'll be able to return to routine activities within 48 to 72 hours, it usually takes the jawbone several weeks to heal completely.

Tooth extraction aftercare

After your extraction, your dentist will give you a detailed list of post-surgical instructions. Here are some general guidelines for a speedy recovery:

- **Keep the extraction site clean.** Gently rinse the area with an antimicrobial mouthwash two to three times a day. Avoid brushing directly over your extraction site until your dentist tells you it's safe to do so. Brush and floss all other areas normally.
- **Take all medications as directed.** Your dentist may prescribe [antibiotics](#) and [pain relievers](#). It's important to take all of these medications exactly as directed. You can also take over-the-counter pain relievers, such as [acetaminophen](#) and [ibuprofen](#).
- **Avoid strenuous activity for at least two days.** An elevated heart rate can cause increased post-operative bleeding and discomfort. Skip the gym for the first 48 to 72 hours. Ask your dentist when it's safe to resume normal routines.

What can I eat after a tooth extraction?

Avoid hard and crunchy foods for the first few days. Stock your fridge and pantry with soft foods like rice, pasta, eggs, yogurt and applesauce. You'll also want to avoid drinking through straws, as this can dislodge blood clots and cause dry sockets.

When can I go back to work or school?

Most people are able to return to work or school within a day or two. If you have a job that requires a lot of lifting or physical labor, you may need to take a few more days off work.

When to Call the Doctor

When should I see my healthcare provider?

Any time you develop a [toothache](#) or dental pain, it's important to schedule a visit with your dentist. They can help determine the cause and design a personalized treatment plan.

If you've already had a tooth extraction, call your dentist if you develop a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher, drainage (pus) around the extraction site or severe pain that doesn't improve with medication.