

# Hill Country Oral Surgery

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## After Socket Grafting

The following information applies when bone grafting material has been placed into extraction sites to help preserve your jawbone in preparation for possible implant replacement of the extracted tooth. Your bone graft is made up of many particles. You may find some small granules your mouth for the first several days. Do not be alarmed by these. It's normal to have some of them come out of the graft site and into your mouth. A membrane may have been placed over the grafting site to aid in healing. It may appear as a white object in the socket site. **Generally, after the first couple of days a part of it will loosen and come out. This is normal.**

- **Bleeding** – The bone graft particles can slow the clotting process, so it is not uncommon to have bleeding for several hours after the procedure. You may even notice some blood in your saliva the following day, so do not be alarmed. You should moisten the gauze, set it directly over the site, and leave it in for 1 full hour at a time. Replace the gauze with a new gauze every hour. Once the gauze is just pink you may leave it out. If the bleeding persists or seems excessive, you may moisten tea bags (any type of tea) and place directly over the area and cover with a gauze pad. Do not sit over a sink and spit continuously because this will result in more bleeding. Bleeding after tooth extraction can exist for a few hours. Blood in the saliva may persist for several days.
- **Food** – For the first three weeks you will want to avoid the graft site with chewing. You can eat right away even if your mouth is numb. If you had anesthesia you may want to start by sipping clear liquids first. If you tolerate this, then you may advance your diet to soft foods that are easy to chew like mashed potatoes, pastas, soups, etc. Initially when you are numb you want to be careful with temperatures of the foods, so you do not burn yourself.
- **Medications** – The numbness can last 2 – 8 hours depending on the anesthetic used. Your goal is to eat and get the pain medication on board before the numbness diminishes because this is generally the hardest point to get through. A common side-effect of pain medication is nausea. Taking food before pain medications can help prevent this.
- **Swelling** – To help reduce swelling apply an ice pack to the surgical area periodically for the first 48 hours. For the first 2 days sleep with your head elevated in a recliner or with a couple extra pillows to prevent further swelling. After the first 2 days, you may apply heat to the area to break up any bruising.
- **Hygiene** – After the bleeding has stopped, you should start salt water rinses after you have anything to eat or drink other than water. The salt water rinse should be composed of 8 oz of warm water with one teaspoon of salt. You can brush your teeth normally just being careful next to the graft sites.
- **Activity** – For the first 2-3 days following surgery you should stay home and rest. You want to avoid any heavy physical activity or exercise for 5 days following the surgery.
- **Common mistakes often made:**
  - **Changing the gauze too soon or too frequently resulting in excessive bleeding**
  - **Waiting to take pain medications until you are in pain resulting in poor pain control**
  - **Inadequate food intake before taking pain medications resulting in nausea**
  - **Not rinsing with salt water after meals resulting in food impaction and pain**
  - **Physical activity too soon resulting in dry socket and increased soreness**

**Contact the office with any questions.**

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