



# DRY SOCKET

## A F T E R C A R E

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### WHAT IS DRY SOCKET?

Only a very small percentage – about 2% to 5% of people – develop dry socket after a tooth extraction. In those who have it, though, dry socket can be uncomfortable. Fortunately, it's easily treatable.

The socket is the hole in the bone where the tooth has been removed. After a tooth is pulled, a blood clot forms in the socket to protect the bone and nerves underneath. Sometimes that clot can become dislodged, or it can dissolve a couple of days after the extraction. That leaves the bone and nerve exposed to air, food, fluid, and severe pain that can last for 5 or 6 days.

### WHO IS LIKELY TO GET DRY SOCKET?

**Some people may be more likely to get dry socket after having a tooth pulled. That includes people who:**

- Smoke
- Have poor oral hygiene
- Have wisdom teeth pulled
- Use birth control pills
- Have a history of dry sockets after having teeth pulled

Rinsing and spitting a lot or drinking through a straw after having a tooth extracted can raise your risk of getting dry socket.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DRY SOCKET?

If you look into the site where the tooth was pulled, you'll probably see a dry-looking opening. Instead of a dark red blood clot, there will just be whitish bone. The pain typically starts about 2 days after the tooth was pulled. Over time it becomes more severe and can radiate to your ear. Other symptoms of dry socket include bad breath and an unpleasant smell and taste in your mouth.

### HOW IS DRY SOCKET TREATED?

You can take a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), such as aspirin or ibuprofen, to ease the discomfort. Sometimes these over the counter medications aren't enough to relieve the pain. When that's the case, your doctor may prescribe a stronger drug or will have you come into the office to rinse out the socket and place a dry socket medication into the area.