

# EXTRACTIONS

## Extractions

There are times when it is necessary to remove a tooth. Sometimes a baby tooth has misshapen or long roots that prevent it from falling out as it should, and the tooth must be removed to make way for the permanent tooth to erupt. At other times, a tooth may have so much decay that it puts the surrounding teeth and jaw at risk of decay, so your doctor may recommend removal and replacement with a bridge or implant. Infection, orthodontic correction, or problems with a wisdom tooth can also require removal of a tooth.

When it is determined that a tooth needs to be removed, your dentist may extract the tooth during a regular checkup or may schedule another visit for this procedure. The root of each tooth is encased within your jawbone in a "tooth socket," and your tooth is held in that socket by a ligament. In order to extract a tooth, your dentist must expand the socket and separate the tooth from the ligament holding it in place. While this procedure is typically very quick, it is important to share with your doctor any concerns or preferences for sedation.

Once a tooth has been removed, neighboring teeth may shift, causing problems with chewing or with your jaw joint function. To avoid these complications, your dentist may recommend that you replace the extracted tooth.

# ORAL CANCER SCREENING

Our office is not only dedicated to your smile, we're also dedicated to your overall wellness. We take a holistic approach to your dental care, which includes an oral cancer screening as a part of your regular exam. Like many kinds of cancer, oral cancer can be life-threatening if not diagnosed and treated early.

We have the skills and tools to ensure that early signs and symptoms of oral cancer and pre-cancerous conditions are identified. While these symptoms may be caused by other, less serious problems, it is very important to visit our office to rule out the possibility of oral cancer. The most common symptoms of oral cancer include:

- Red or white spots or sores anywhere in the oral cavity
- A sore that bleeds easily or does not heal
- A lump, thickening, or rough spot
- Pain, tenderness, or numbness anywhere in the mouth or on the lips
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, speaking, or moving the jaw or tongue
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Our team is trained in a simple, quick screening that involves an examination of your oral cavity as a whole, and not just your teeth, to detect cancerous and precancerous conditions. Besides a visual examination of your mouth, we will also feel the tissue of your mouth and throat to detect any abnormalities. If we find an area of concern, we may perform a simple test, such as a brush test, which collects cells from a suspicious lesion in the mouth to be sent to a laboratory for analysis. If this test comes back atypical or positive, we may recommend a biopsy.

Aside from receiving an oral cancer screening during your checkup at our office, there are many things you can do to help prevent oral cancer.

- The best way to prevent oral cancer is to avoid all tobacco products and only drink alcohol in moderation.
- Maintain a healthy, balanced diet.
- Limit your exposure to the sun and always wear UV-A/B-blocking, sun-protective lotions on your skin as well as your lips.
- During your next dental appointment, ask your dentist to perform an oral exam. Early detection of oral cancer can improve the chance of successful treatment.