# Today, don't rinse too often.

The blood clot in the socket is the "lid" over the wound. Rinsing again and again can wash it away and start the bleeding again.[1][2]

## How much bleeding is normal?

### A little blood in your saliva

**Normal**

Common on the day of the extraction. You can wait and see.

### Blood oozes and collects in your mouth

**Normal: press with gauze**

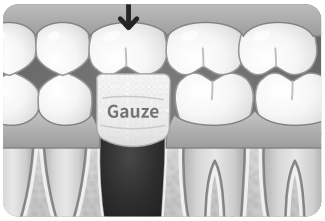
Gently spit it out, then bite on gauze as shown below.

### Your mouth fills with red blood

**Call the clinic now**

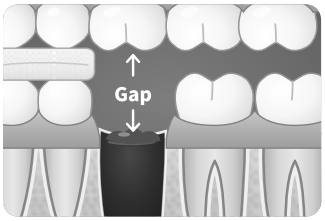
Also if two rounds of 20 minutes on gauze don't stop it.[1]

## How to bite on gauze




**Place it right over the socket and bite firmly**

Your upper teeth press the gauze onto the socket.




**Biting on the teeth next to it**

The socket isn't pressed, so the bleeding won't stop.

1. **Gently** spit out any blood in your mouth
2. Place a rolled-up piece of gauze **over the socket**[1]
3. Bite firmly for **20 minutes**. **Don't keep checking**[1]
4. If it hasn't stopped, **repeat once**[1]
5. If it still hasn't stopped, **call the clinic**[1]

**If you take blood thinners:** if pressure doesn't stop the bleeding, or it starts again, call the clinic right away instead of repeating.[1]

**2–3 hours**
until the numbness wears off

Numbness of the lips and tongue usually lasts about 2–3 hours (it varies with the person and the amount of anaesthetic).[5] While you are numb, you can bite your lip or tongue, or burn yourself, without noticing. **Wait to eat until the numbness has worn off.**

## Avoid today

- **Rinsing often** — Start gentle rinsing tomorrow[1][2]
- **Touching the socket** — No tongue, fingers or toothpicks[1]
- **Skipping painkillers** — Take them as directed[3]
- **Alcohol and smoking** — Avoid for the first few days[3]
- **Hot drinks** — Can restart bleeding, cause burns[3]
- **Hard food, nuts, seeds** — Nuts and seeds get into the socket[3]

**From your clinic** A clinic stamp is fine for contact details

**Phone** _____ **Next visit** ☐ Wound check ☐ Stitch removal ☐ Other Date: Time:

**Nights / holidays** _____ **Medicine** ☐ Painkiller ☐ Antibiotic ☐ Mouthwash ☐ Other ( )

**References** [1] SDCEP. Management of Acute Dental Problems, 2nd ed. 2026. Post-extraction haemorrhage. [2] Ibid. Alveolar osteitis (dry socket). [3] NHS. Wisdom tooth removal: Recovery. Updated June 2024. [5] Hersh EV, et al. J Am Dent Assoc. 2008;139(8):1080-1093.

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# Pain peaks on days 1–2. If it gets worse later, call the clinic.

## Day-to-day tips

The key is to protect the blood clot

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rinsing** | Avoid on the day of the extraction. From the next day, rinse gently.[2] |
| **Brushing** | Brush your other teeth as usual. Don't scrub the extraction site.[3] |
| **Hot drinks** | Avoid. They can restart bleeding.[3] |
| **Eating** | Choose soft food. Avoid hard or crunchy food, nuts and seeds.[3] |
| **Alcohol / smoking** | Avoid for the first few days. Smoking makes a dry socket more likely.[3][4] |
| **Exercise** | If you have had bleeding, avoid it for 24 hours after it stops.[1] |

## Normal pain vs. dry socket

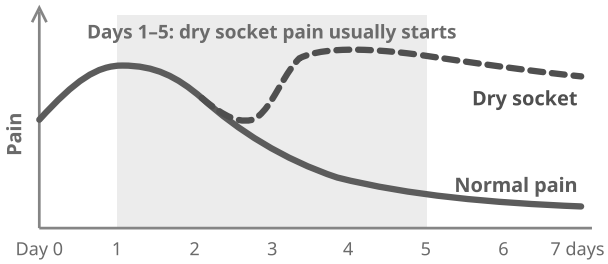


Illustration only. Pain varies from person to person.

Normal pain and swelling **start to improve after 1–2 days**.[3] Until then, don't hold back on your painkillers.

If the pain **gets better and then becomes severe**, it may be a dry socket. An empty-looking socket or a bad taste or smell are also signs.[2][4] Don't try to treat it yourself; call the clinic.

## When to call

### Right away (even at night)

- Swelling that makes it **hard to breathe or swallow** → call the clinic. If you can't reach them, call an **ambulance (119)**.[6]
- **Bleeding that won't stop** after two rounds of 20 minutes on gauze[1]

### Call soon

- Pain not controlled by painkillers, or pain and swelling that **keep getting worse**[3]
- Severe pain **after it had been improving**; an empty-looking socket, bad taste or smell[2][4]
- Fever or feeling unwell[3]

### OK to wait and see

- A little blood in your saliva
- Pain and swelling on days 1–2 that slowly settle[3]
- A bruise on the cheek, a stiff jaw[3]

**If you're not sure, or you're worried, don't hesitate to call.**

## 3–4 months

a rough guide until bone fills the socket

Even after the gum has closed, healing continues underneath. Within a few weeks the socket fills with soft tissue, and then bone forms. How long this takes varies a lot from person to person.[7] If food gets into the socket, don't pick at it with a toothpick; ask your dentist.

Clinic contact (stamp is fine)

Notes

**References**

[1] SDCEP. Management of Acute Dental Problems, 2nd ed. 2026. Post-extraction haemorrhage. [2] Ibid. Alveolar osteitis (dry socket). [3] NHS. Wisdom tooth removal: Recovery. Updated June 2024. [4] Kuśnierek W, et al. Dent J. 2022;10(7):121. [6] SDCEP. Ibid. Timescales for treatment. [7] Trombelli L, et al. J Clin Periodontol. 2008;35(7):630-639. "3–4 months" is the guide the author gives patients in practice.

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