

Let's Talk About...

Dental care after a procedure

Dental care is a normal part of childhood. Your child may have fillings, teeth removed, teeth cleaned, fluoride treatments, crowns, or caps. After dental procedures, you will need to help your child take care of their mouth.



What can I expect if my child has a sedative or numbing treatment?

A dentist may give your child nitrous oxide (often called laughing gas) to help them relax during the dental treatment. This is safe and not intended to put your child to sleep. Instead, the gas should make your child feel warm, relaxed, and comfortable. Your child may have nausea after nitrous oxide wears off, but this is not common.

The dentist may use numbing medicine in your child's mouth when they pull teeth or do other dental treatments. This medicine makes your child's mouth numb for about 2–4 hours. Watch your child carefully and make sure they don't bite or scratch their cheeks, lips, or tongue while they are numb. Some children do not understand this feeling and may become upset or confuse it with pain. You can tell your child the "funny feeling" will go away in about 2 hours.

Will my child have pain or swelling after dental treatment?

Mild swelling and pain are normal after some dental treatments. Alternating acetaminophen (such as Tylenol™) and ibuprofen (such as Motrin™) throughout the day can help relieve your child's pain. Call the dentist if your child has a lot of pain and swelling that does not go down.

What can I expect if my child has a tooth pulled?

If your child has a tooth removed (also called an extraction), the dentist may put gauze pressure packs in your child's mouth to control normal bleeding near the site. Your child usually does not need any pain medicine or antibiotics after an extraction. Do not let your child suck from a straw or drink sodas for 48 hours after having a tooth pulled, because this may cause more bleeding.

What can I expect if my child has dental fillings or caps?

After fillings or crowns (caps), your child's teeth may be sensitive to heat, cold, or pressure for a short time. It may take several weeks for teeth with fillings or caps to feel normal again. The gum tissue surrounding the tooth may also be irritated. This is normal and will go down over time.

What can my child eat after dental treatment?

After dental treatment, especially extractions, your child should eat soft foods like gelatin, pudding, and smoothies and drink clear, noncarbonated beverages like water, juice, and electrolyte drinks (such as Gatorad™). They should avoid eating crunchy or sticky foods.

