



## You Have a "Dry Socket"

### Here's what it is ...

When a tooth is removed, a "hole" is left in the jaw bone. Healing normally occurs with a blood clot forming in the "hole." New tissue and finally bone then forms in the clot.

Sometimes the clot is either lost or doesn't form properly. We do not yet know the whole reason for this, it is more common in women and people who smoke or are on medicines. When this happens you begin to have *pain*, which usually starts to increase the third to fifth day after the tooth was removed. The pain will many times radiate to the jaw and ear. It is caused by *exposed* bone that is not covered by a clot or new tissue. You will also notice a bad taste and odor. "Dry socket" is most likely to occur in wisdom and difficult tooth extraction cases.

### Here's what it is not ...

A "dry socket" is *not* an infection.

A "dry socket" is *not* an ear problem-pain radiates to the ear from the extraction site.

### This is how we treat it ...

Treatment is very simple. The socket is rinsed out to remove all debris. A gauze dressing containing special medication is then placed into the socket to numb, cover, and protect the exposed bone. This will promote healing and tissue growth. Your pain should subside shortly after treatment. This special dressing will be changed several times to keep you comfortable while the socket is healing. If your dressing should fall out and/or your pain return prior to your scheduled appointment, please call the office and we will replace the dressing if necessary. For most sockets, 2 or 3 treatments will keep you comfortable and promote healing.

*Hang in there ... you'll be smiling again shortly!*