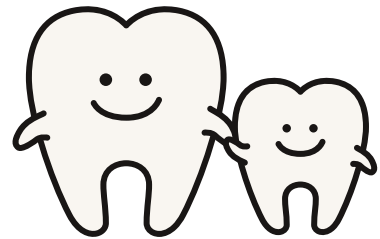


ROYA PILCHER, DDS

Tooth Extractions in Children



Smile Valley

EST.09

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY



TOOTH EXTRACTIONS IN CHILDREN

There's nothing like the excitement of watching your child lose their first tooth; and it helps that most baby teeth come out on their own. But occasionally, baby teeth need a little help to move things along. When teeth are badly decayed or damaged, or when baby teeth start to crowd adult teeth coming in, it may be necessary to consider having your child's teeth extracted.

This isn't as scary as it sounds. In most cases, a tooth extraction for your little one is a simple procedure, and needn't cause any worry in you or your child.

WHY DO CHILDREN NEED TOOTH EXTRACTIONS?



Your dentist may recommend an extraction for your child for a number of reasons:

- The tooth is badly decayed
- The tooth is damaged by injury or trauma
- Baby teeth remain in place for too long and crowd adult teeth. Extracting the tooth can help the adult teeth come in and eliminate the need for orthodontic treatment down the road
- Extraction is required to help orthodontic treatment: removing a tooth can reduce crowding and allow your orthodontist to straighten neighboring teeth.



WHAT DOES TOOTH EXTRACTION IN CHILDREN INVOLVE?

Getting a tooth pulled may cause a little anxiety for both parents and children, but in most cases, the procedure is straightforward and less involved than a tooth extraction in adults.

Your dentist will start with an X-ray to check out the tooth's roots and bone condition. A simple extraction typically only requires a local anesthetic. Your dentist then removes the tooth with forceps, moving the tooth in the socket and rotating it to separate the periodontal ligaments that attach the tooth to the jawbone. Often, nitrous oxide sedation will be recommended to help keep your child comfortable during the procedure. While local anesthetic does remove the sensation of pain from the procedure, many children will still feel pressure during the extraction. Using nitrous oxide sedation eases the child's discomfort in these cases, and makes the appointment less stressful.



FOLLOW-UP CARE FOR TOOTH EXTRACTION IN CHILDREN

Remind your child (and yourself) that a little bleeding is normal following an extraction. Your dentist will apply pressure with gauze to the affected area directly after the tooth is removed. The gums will quickly form a protective blood clot, and it's important to keep that clot in place to avoid dry socket, a painful condition that happens when the clot is removed and the underlying bone is exposed to air, food, and liquids.

In some cases, bleeding will persist for the first 24 hours.

If bleeding continues after that time, call Dr Pilcher to let her know.

To allow the protective clot to form, avoid rinsing for the first 24 hours. You can give your child Tylenol or ibuprofen to help with pain and use an ice pack outside the jaw for mild swelling. Soft, cold foods like popsicles or ice cream, will feel good on the first day.

Your child should eat soft food for the first few days and avoid hard or crunchy foods for a week to make sure the extraction area stays clean and the protective clot remains in place.

Encourage your child to drink plenty of water to keep their mouth clean and remain hydrated.



SAVING SPACE FOR ADULT TEETH

Baby teeth are in some ways placeholders for adult teeth and help guide the permanent teeth as they come in. If a baby tooth is removed because of damage or decay before the permanent teeth are scheduled to arrive, your dentist may recommend a space maintainer to make sure the new tooth comes in correctly. But if the permanent tooth is not far off from coming in, this won't be needed.

Remember, pediatric tooth extractions are common and in most cases are simple. As always, if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Dr. Pilcher.