
Post-Operative Instructions: Dental Implants

AFTER PLACEMENT OF DENTAL IMPLANTS

Do not disturb the wound. Avoid rinsing, spitting, or touching the wound on the day of surgery. In most cases, there will be a metal healing abutment protruding through the gingival (gum) tissue.

Bleeding

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, call for further instructions.

Swelling

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2–3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Two baggies filled with ice, or ice packs, should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left on continuously while you are awake. After 36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. This is a normal reaction to surgery. 36 hours following surgery, the application of moist heat to the sides of the face is beneficial in reducing the size of the swelling.

Pain

For moderate pain, one or two tablets of Tylenol® or Extra Strength Tylenol® may be taken every 4 to 6 hours, or ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®), two to four 200 mg tablets may be taken every 6 hours.

For severe pain, take the tablets prescribed as directed. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery should start to subside mostly after post-op day 3. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office.

Diet

After general anesthetic or IV sedation, liquids should be initially taken. Do not use straws. Drink from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Nourishment should be taken regularly. You should prevent dehydration by taking fluids regularly. Your food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. At least 5–6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort, and heal faster if you continue to eat. Caution: If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position, you may become dizzy. If you are lying down following surgery, make sure you sit for 1 minute before standing.



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Keep the Mouth Clean

Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. The night of surgery, if Peridex™ is prescribed, use before bed. The day after surgery, Peridex should be used twice daily, after breakfast and before bed. Be sure to rinse for at least 30 seconds, then spit it out. Warm salt water rinses (teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) should be used at least 4–5 times a day as well, especially after meals. Brushing your teeth and the healing abutments is no problem. Be gentle initially with brushing the surgical areas.

Discoloration

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2–3 days post-operatively. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

Antibiotics

If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. Call the office if you have any questions.

Nausea and Vomiting

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour, including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on coke, tea, or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a 15-minute period. When the nausea subsides, you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine.

Other Complications

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation. So be careful. Call your surgeon if you have any questions.
- Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.
- You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. You were not able to eat or drink prior to surgery. It was also difficult to take fluids. Taking pain medications can make you dizzy. You could get lightheaded when you stand up suddenly. Before standing up you should sit for 1 minute, then get up.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots, they are the bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed by your surgeon.
- If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as Vaseline®.
- Sore throat and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2–3 days.



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- Stiffness (trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

Finally

Sutures are placed in the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged; this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. If the sutures are not the dissolvable type, then they will be removed in 1–2 weeks. The removal of sutures requires no anesthesia or needles. It takes only a minute or so, and there is no discomfort associated with this procedure. So it's really nothing to worry about.

The pain and swelling should subside more and more each day following surgery. If your post-operative pain or swelling worsens or unusual symptoms occur, call our office for instructions.

There will be a cavity where the tooth was removed. The cavity will gradually (over the next month) fill in with the new tissue. In the meantime, the area should be kept clean especially after meals with salt water rinses or a toothbrush. Your case is individual, no two mouths are alike.

Do not accept well intended advice from friends. Discuss your problem with the persons best able to effectively help you: Drs. Livesay, Carey, Naselsker , or your family dentist.

Brushing your teeth is OK—just be gentle at the surgical sites. A dry socket is when the blood clot gets dislodged prematurely from the tooth socket. Symptoms of pain at the surgical site and even pain to the ear may occur 3–5 days following surgery.

Call the office if this occurs. If you are involved in regular exercise, be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced. Exercise may weaken you. If you get light headed, stop exercising.

Activity

Keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery. If you are considering exercise, throbbing or bleeding may occur. If this occurs, you should discontinue exercising. Keep in mind that you are probably not taking normal nourishment. This may weaken you and further limit your ability to exercise.

Wearing Your Prosthesis

Partial dentures, flippers, or full dentures in most cases can be used immediately after surgery. Follow up with your general dentist for adjustments of your partial, flipper, or denture. This was discussed in the pre-operative consultation.

All-on-4® Post-Operative Diet

A softer diet is recommended for patients that have undergone the All-on-4 procedure. Strict adherence to a



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modified food diet is extremely important to the success of your procedure. Foods that are soft enough to be cut with a fork and require minimal chewing for digestion would be appropriate.

Suggestions are as follows:

- Scrambled eggs
- Yogurt
- Mashed potatoes
- Soup
- Baked/grilled fish
- Oatmeal
- Pasta
- Steamed vegetables

FOODS NOT TO EAT (avoid all that require tearing or biting with your front teeth). Examples are as follows:

- Pizza
- Raw vegetables
- Bagels
- Nuts
- Steak
- Sandwiches
- Apples
- Anything hard/crunchy

The modified diet is to be maintained until you receive your permanent prosthesis, usually about 6 months.

Refrain from smoking during this time, as it can be detrimental to your procedure. If your bite feels off, contact your dentist immediately.