

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: DENTAL IMPLANTS

PLEASE READ BOTH SIDES OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

Sometimes, the aftereffects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do; however, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification. Our number is (208) 232-2807.

DAY OF SURGERY

Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical site. The gauze may be removed after 1 hour. It is normal for intermittent oozing to happen over the next 24 hours. Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do not rinse vigorously or probe with any objects.

PRESCRIPTIONS

You will be given 3 prescriptions, 2 of which we already discussed, and 1 of which will be discussed below.

PAIN CONTROL

Unfortunately, most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will be prescribed a pain medicine, commonly Vicodin®, which can be taken every 4–6 hours. We recommend you take the first pill before the numbness has worn off so that you will be able to better manage any discomfort.

After you leave our office, get something to eat, and then 45–60 minutes after you eat, take 1 pain pill. If you eat a small amount of food before taking a pain pill, the chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals, and in certain instances, we write for other pain prescriptions. Read the prescription bottles to be better informed about when you can take medications. If you do not find adequate relief at first, you may supplement each pain pill with over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen or Advil®. Some patients may even require 2 pain pills at one time. Remember that the most severe pain usually occurs within the first 6 hours after the numbness wears off.

SWELLING

Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by keeping your head elevated and by using an ice pack wrapped in a thin towel applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off during the first 24–48 hours after surgery. Swelling normally peaks on or around the third day after surgery. Bruising is often the result of swelling and may show up after the swelling peaks.

DIET

Avoid extremely hot foods or drinks for 48 hours after your surgery. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to limit the first 2–3 days' intake to liquids or soft foods. Always try to chew on the opposite side of your mouth. During your healing period of 3–4 months, it is very important that you do not chew on the implant site — it may result in implant failure. It is best to avoid foods such as nuts, popcorn, and chips, which can get lodged in the surgical site. It is important not to skip meals. If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort, and heal faster.



POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: DENTAL IMPLANTS (CONT.)

MOUTH RINSES

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use your prescription mouth rinse as directed, as well as warm saltwater rinses. Dissolve ¼ teaspoon of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution. Use at least 3 times per day.

SUTURES

Normally, sutures will dissolve in about a week. If a bone graft was done, stitches will remain in the mouth for about 3 weeks. We will need to remove these stitches in the office.

Sometimes, the aftereffects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of these instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Please call our office or our implant coordinators if you have questions or concerns.