

## Post-Operative Instructions: Dental Implants

This video will cover important information regarding proper post-surgical care for dental implants. Usually, the after-effects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of these instructions may apply. Similar procedures can result in varying outcomes between people.

Care of your mouth is very important for proper healing. The following instructions will maximize your healing and improve the long-term outcome of your dental implant or implants.

It is very important that you avoid smoking for a minimum of 5 days. Smoking will increase your bleeding; the nicotine and tar in tobacco impair healing. In fact, avoiding smoking for the duration of healing will significantly increase the likelihood of a successful implant integration. We cannot warranty implants for our patients who use tobacco (pipe, cigar, cigarette, or chewing).

Do NOT disturb the wound. Avoid spitting or touching the wound for a few days after surgery. There may be a metal stump slightly protruding through the gum tissue. Do NOT chew on the implant site for 4 weeks. After 4 weeks, you may chew soft foods only. Avoid eating anything hard, crunchy, and/or chewy for the entire duration of healing, which is usually 8 weeks, as determined by your surgeon at the time of surgery.

Unless we have instructed you otherwise, do no vigorous physical activity for one week following your surgery. Physical activity increases your blood pressure, which will cause an increase in your swelling, pain, and bleeding. You may gradually increase your activity, such as jogging or tennis, after a week.

Swelling is normal after surgery and can be a cause of discomfort. You should apply ice packs to your face over the surgical areas for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for the first 24 hours to help minimize swelling. Swelling tends to peak 48 hours after surgery. Assume a semi-upright position with your head elevated above your heart when resting.

You will go home with gauze packs in your mouth, but you will need to change them, once you get home, every 15–30 minutes until the bleeding decreases or subsides. You should place the provided gauze packs directly over the surgical sites. If bleeding continues or is excessive, place a non-herbal black tea bag over the surgical sites and bite firmly for 45 minutes to one hour with constant pressure. Repeat if necessary. Some oozing or pink saliva may occur over the next several days.

Plan to rest for the remainder of the surgery day. You should not drive, operate heavy or dangerous equipment, or sign any legal documents for at least 24 hours following general anesthesia.

Take the prescribed pain reliever before the numbness starts to subside, making sure that you have eaten beforehand. If you develop hives or a rash from any of the medications, discontinue them and call our office. Beginning the day before your surgery, you should take up to 2–3 tablets of 200 mg Advil® or ibuprofen, continuing after surgery between each dose of the prescribed pain medication for 4–5 days. Remember, narcotic pain medicine can impair your judgment and reflexes. Take your prescribed antibiotics and continue those until they are gone.

If you feel nauseated, drink small portions of a carbonated drink such as 7UP® or ginger ale every hour for 3 or 4 hours. This will usually terminate your nausea. Bland foods like soda crackers, tea, clear broth, Jell-O®, applesauce, or unbuttered toast can also help with nausea. Avoid all milk and dairy products as long as nausea is present. If you are taking a narcotic, you may also take half the dose or break the pill in half.

Rinse with the prescribed antibacterial rinse twice a day for 7–10 days, beginning 24 hours after your surgery. Warm saltwater rinses are also recommended, starting the night after surgery. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt with 8 ounces of warm water. Brushing your teeth and the healing abutments is no problem, as long as you are using a manual toothbrush and NOT an electronic or ultrasonic toothbrush. Brush twice daily, being gentle initially around the surgical site.

Protein is necessary for proper tissue production and healing; therefore, we suggest a high-protein soft diet including foods such as scrambled eggs. Increase your fluid intake to at least four 8-ounce glasses per day, but do not use a straw. Gradually increase your diet to solid foods and do not skip meals! This is not a time to diet! If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, and have less discomfort, and this will promote healing.

If you've had a SAME DAY SMILE procedure, you will need to maintain a liquid diet for the first 2 months. NO CHEWING OF ANY KIND DURING THIS PERIOD! After 2 months, chew soft foods only. Avoid eating anything hard, crunchy, and/or chewy for the entire duration of healing, which will most likely be 3–6 months, as determined by your surgeon at the time of surgery. Begin cleaning underneath the temporary hybrid gently with a proxy brush one week after surgery.