



Post-Operative Instructions: Dental Implants

After dental implant surgery, it is important that you do not disturb the surgery site. There may be a metal abutment or custom tissue former protruding through the gum tissue.

Bleeding

- Some oozing and slight bleeding (redness in saliva) is normal after surgery.
- Leave the gauze pad over the area(s) of surgery for about 30-60 minutes following the procedure. You may replace with the fresh gauze provided in your post-operative bag. Leave the gauze in place for a minimum of 20-30 minutes after changing. Repeat this process until the bleeding stops or significantly slows. A clot should form within a few hours after surgery, after which you no longer need to use gauze.
 - DO NOT go to sleep with any gauze in your mouth.
- For persistent bleeding, place a piece of gauze pad over the area(s) and apply mild pressure. Repeat if necessary.
 - You may also gently bite on a moistened black or green tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea helps the formation of a clot by constricting blood vessels.
- Avoid the following as they can prohibit clot formation and increase bleeding:
 - Drinking through a straw
 - Aggressive rinsing of the mouth
 - Exercise/strenuous activity for three days following surgery
 - Hot/carbonated beverages
 - Smoking for at least 72 hours following surgery. Ideally, stopping any/all tobacco use is always recommended.

Swelling

Swelling is the body's normal reaction to surgery. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will peak around 2-3 days post-operatively.

- Ice packs (or baggies filled with ice) should be used for the first 24-36 hours after surgery to help reduce swelling.
 - Ice packs can be applied to the cheek, on the exterior of the extraction sites.
 - Use for 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off

- After 36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect on swelling. If you are still experiencing some swelling and/or jaw stiffness, the application of moist heat to the sides of the face can be helpful.

Pain Management

Pain is often most intense for eight hours following surgery and should subside more and more every day.

- For moderate pain:
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol): 500-1000mg every 6 hours, not to exceed 3000-4000mg daily for an adult. Ask your surgeon about your specific dosing.
 - Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin): 400-600mg every 6 hours, not to exceed 3200mg daily for an adult. Ask your surgeon about patients under 18.
 - Acetaminophen and ibuprofen can be taken at the same time, or their dosing can be staggered.
- Narcotics should be used as a second-line medication.
 - If prescribed, fill the prescription immediately and take as directed.
 - Be sure to take with food to minimize the risk of nausea.
 - Do not drive a car, operate machinery, make important decisions, sign legal documents, or drink alcohol while taking narcotics.

Antibiotics

If you were prescribed an antibiotic, take for the full course prescribed, even if signs and symptoms of infection are not present.

- **Women, please note:** Some antibiotics may interfere with the effectiveness of your birth control pills. Please check with your pharmacist or primary care provider.

Diet

- After IV sedation or general anesthesia, only liquids should initially be consumed for 4-6 hours following the surgery. Drink from a glass and do not use straws.
- Be sure to drink enough fluids. To prevent dehydration, drink at least 5-6 glasses of liquid daily.
- Eat soft foods and liquids the day following surgery. Unless otherwise directed, you may return to a normal diet as soon as you feel comfortable. However, continue to avoid chewing hard or crunchy items in the area of surgery.
- If you have an immediate provisional crown placed, please discuss specific chewing instructions with your surgeon.

Other

- Use the antiseptic mouth rinse the morning of surgery and continue to use it twice daily (morning and before bed) for two weeks following surgery.
- Salt water rinses (1 teaspoon of salt mixed in 8 oz of warm water) should be used 4-5 times daily, especially after meals.
- Continue to brush your teeth, being gentle around the surgical site(s). If there are sutures (stitches), do not brush over them for the first 3 days after surgery.

When to Call

- If your bleeding worsens (i.e. if you can see blood actively flowing from your implant site).
- If you develop a rash, diarrhea, or any other reaction to medication we have prescribed you, stop taking the medication and call the office immediately.
- Severe pain that is not reduced with the use of acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or narcotics.
- Swelling that persists or is not improving after 5-7 days.
- If you feel any piece of your implant is loose or displaced.