

Dental Implants Post Operative Instructions

The placement of dental implants usually does not create a great deal of pain. In order to assure the best possible results, certain instructions should be followed after surgery.

General Instructions

- Do not wear your complete or partial dentures until your doctor gives you permission to do so. If a temporary tooth was/is to be placed on your implant today, it is critical that you do not bite on this tooth until your doctor allows.
- Occasionally, the cover screw or healing abutment may loosen or fall out. This should not affect the stability of your implant. It is important, however, to call us as soon as possible so we can replace it for you.
- It is absolutely essential that all follow-up appointments be kept. Routine follow-up appointments allow us to identify potential problems that could complicate your recovery.

Pain

- Some degree of discomfort and pain arises as the numbness subsides. We recommend that you start taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory once you arrive home. Advil/Ibuprofen/Motrin/Aleve are such medications and should be taken as directed on the bottle (usually 400 mg every 4-6 hours). If you are unable to take anti-inflammatory medications, take Tylenol or acetaminophen as directed on the bottle (usually 650 mg -1000 mg every 6 hours). If the pain is not relieved, then you may take the prescribed pain medication as directed. All pain medications have the ability to cause severe nausea and vomiting, so try to have some food in your stomach before you take them.
- Do not wait for the pain to become unbearable before using some form of pain medication, as then it will be more difficult to control. Moderate to severe pain usually does not last longer than 24-72 hours, **sometimes peaking on the 3rd postoperative day**. Relief should begin on the 4th post-operative day.

Bleeding

- Expect minor bleeding or **OOZING** from the operative site. **This bleeding may continue throughout the first day**. Keep firm pressure on the surgical site by biting on a gauze sponge for 30 minutes at a time until bleeding subsides. Once the oozing has slowed down, try to avoid placing gauze or any other irritant near the surgical site as this will only lead to further bleeding and discomfort. Biting on a moist tea bag wrapped in gauze may help control persistent oozing.
- If active bleeding should recur at any time, carefully rinse your mouth with cold water and apply a fresh gauze sponge to the bleeding site. Firm pressure for 15-30 minutes usually controls the problem. Should active bleeding persist, please call the office and a member of our surgical team will return your call promptly.

The Surgical Site

- The first stages of healing are aided by allowing tissues to rest. Avoid vigorous chewing, excessive spitting, or rinsing for the first 24 hours as initial healing may be delayed, active bleeding restarted, or infection introduced.
- **Try to avoid smoking completely**, as it tends to slow the healing process and may also contribute to infection & prolonged discomfort.
- **Do not worry about the stitches if they start to come out**. The sutures usually dissolve in 5-7 days and **typically do not require removal**.

Swelling

- Swelling usually develops during the first 12-24 hours following surgery, **often peaking on the 3rd post-operative day**. Swelling can be minimized by placing an ice pack on the affected side at 30 minute intervals during the first 48 hours after surgery.
- **Any swelling, soreness, or stiffness in the jaw muscles** can be relieved by applying a warm moist towel to the affected side of the face several times a day. Moist heat should be used after the first 48 hours.

Activity

- Limit activity during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Excessive exertion may lead to postoperative bleeding and discomfort. When you lie down, keep your head elevated at least 45 degrees on a pillow.
- **Do not drive an automobile** for 24 hours following surgery if you have had general anesthesia or if you are taking prescription pain medication.

Diet

- **FLUID INTAKE IS VERY IMPORTANT.** You can advance to soft foods and other fluids as tolerated. Please avoid hot liquids until the numbness has worn off, and the bleeding has stopped.
- **FOOD SELECTION** is largely a matter of your choice. **Soft, cool foods** that require little or no chewing are most easily tolerated.

Oral Hygiene

- Start cleaning your mouth 24 hours after surgery by using warm salt water rinses (1/4 teaspoon table salt with a small cup of water). Repeat 3 times daily for one week. BRUSH your teeth starting on the first postoperative day being careful not to irritate the surgical site.

Your Medications

- Take any regularly scheduled medication on your regular schedule unless advised to do otherwise. Patients taking blood-thinners (i.e. Coumadin) should restart those medications after surgery unless there is any sign of continued bleeding.

PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE (949-916-7800) AT ANY TIME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.