

Post-operative Instructions: Dental Implants

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Oral surgical wounds usually heal quickly and without complication, if simple precautions are taken. Sometimes the aftereffects of oral surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the following instructions may apply to you. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt follow these guidelines or call our office for clarification.

TAKE ALL PRESCRIPTIONS AND MEDICATIONS AS DIRECTED ON DAY OF SURGERY

THE FIRST FEW HOURS: Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first hour unless the bleeding is not controlled. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 to 60 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 Minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff it for more comfortable positioning.

WOUND CARE: Do not disturb the surgical area today. Do not rinse vigorously or probe the area with any objects. You may brush your teeth gently, avoiding the surgical area. Avoid vigorous exercise for the first several days. **If you smoke, please try to avoid for a two week period, since this is detrimental to healing and may cause complications.** Avoid alcohol for the next several days.

SWELLING: Oral surgery is often associated with post-operative swelling. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek- twenty minutes on, twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. It is especially important to do this for the first few hours after surgery. Immediate and constant gauze compression on the wound and between the gum and cheek, firm, gentle pressure on the cheek with ice pack, and elevation of the head are the best ways to minimize swelling.

PAIN: Unfortunately, some oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort depending on the procedure and patient. You may have a prescription for pain medication; however, Ibuprofen should be adequate for this type of oral surgery. If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage the discomfort better. Remember that the most severe pain is usually within six hours after the local anesthetic wears off; after that, your need for pain medication should lessen with time.

DIET: Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid anything extremely hot or cold. Do not use a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is usually advisable to confine the first day's intake to a soft diet, liquids or pureed foods (soups, pudding, yogurt, milk, fruit shakes, etc). Avoid hard foods, which may be lodged in the surgical areas. Over the next

several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

DENTURE: If you are wearing a denture over the surgical site, no chewing should be performed in this area for several weeks. (See diet instructions above)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS:

MOUTH RINSES: Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use ¼ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse. Repeat as often as you like, but at least two or three times daily, preferably after meals, for one week after surgery. Avoid commercial mouth rinses, as they contain a small amount of alcohol in them.

BRUSHING: Avoid the use of an electric toothbrush or Waterpik for the first two weeks around the surgical site. Begin your normal oral hygiene the day after surgery. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort. Remember, you just had a surgical dental procedure. Be kind to yourself. It is our desire that your recovery is as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these simple instructions will assist you in your recovery, but if you have any questions about your progress, please call our office.

Sincerely,

David Scardella, DMD
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