

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: DENTAL IMPLANT SURGERY

After dental implant surgery, it is important to carefully follow all post-operative instructions and take all medications as instructed. After a dental implant has been placed, in most cases there will be a small metal cylinder (healing abutment) protruding through the gums. Be careful and avoid traumatizing or chewing directly on this area. There may also be sutures; take care not to disturb these. It is very important to take your antibiotics and use your prescription mouth rinse starting the day of surgery. If you did not receive these prescriptions, please call our office immediately.

On rare occasion, the small metal cylinder (healing abutment) may loosen. The dental implant itself is generally fine, but it is important not to swallow the healing abutment. Save the healing abutment. It is not an emergency, but give our office a call, and you will be further instructed. Do keep the area clean by gently rinsing frequently if the healing abutment has come off.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY

The gauze pack should be kept in place with firm pressure over the area the dental implant was placed. Remove the pack after 30 minutes. If there is continued excessive bleeding, replace with new gauze and bite firmly again. Vigorous mouth rinsing or chewing in the areas of the extraction should be avoided. This may cause increased bleeding or the blood clot to dislodge.

A liquid or soft diet is recommended for the first 24 hours after dental implant surgery. After 24 hours, you may advance your diet, but take care to avoid any chewing directly on the implant site. Avoid sucking through straws and eating hard or crunchy foods and spicy foods. Take the prescribed pain medication before the numbness from the local anesthesia wears off.

Restrict your activities on the day of surgery and return to normal activities slowly. Place ice packs on the outside of the face where the implants were placed. Use ice for the first 48 hours to decrease swelling by applying it as continuously as possible.

BLEEDING

Slight bleeding and redness in the saliva are common after dental implant placement. If there is excess bleeding, gently wipe any old clots from the mouth and then place clean new gauze over the area and bite firmly for 30–40 minutes. Repeat every 30–40 minutes with new gauze. If excessive bleeding continues, bite on a cold water-moistened tea bag firmly for 30–40 minutes. Slowly remove the tea bag and leave the area alone. If there is continued excessive bleeding, call our office for further instructions. Also, avoid excessive talking, drinking from a straw, or excessive chewing if there is continued bleeding.

SWELLING

Swelling is normal after any surgical procedure, including the placement of dental implants. The extent of swelling varies and depends on the extent of the surgery and each individual patient. Swelling around the mouth, jaws, cheeks, and below the eyes is not uncommon. The swelling will usually reach its maximum 2–3 days after the placement of the dental implant(s). The swelling can be decreased by the immediate use of ice packs in the first 48 hours. Ice packs should be applied to the outside next to where the dental implant surgery was performed. Keep the ice on as continuously as possible. Also, sitting upright and not lying flat on the first day will help to decrease the amount of swelling. You may have been prescribed other anti-inflammatory medications, such as dexamethasone (Decadron®). If you were prescribed these medications, follow the instructions written on the bottle.

PAIN

Pain medications are normally required after dental implant surgery. If you can take ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®), take 400–800 mg every 6–8 hours or as prescribed by your doctor. Ibuprofen will help with pain relief and swelling reduction as an anti-inflammatory.



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: DENTAL IMPLANT SURGERY (CONT.)

PAIN (CONT.)

If you cannot take ibuprofen, then 1-2 tablets of acetaminophen (regular Tylenol®, 325–650 mg) should be taken every 4–6 hours. If you were prescribed a stronger pain medication such as Norco® (hydrocodone with acetaminophen), Tylenol® with codeine, or Percocet® (oxycodone with acetaminophen), you can take that in addition to your ibuprofen if the pain is severe, but do not combine Norco®, Tylenol® with codeine, or Percocet® with any medication containing acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Follow the directions written on your prescription bottle. If you do take any of these medications, do not drive or work around machinery. Also, avoid alcohol while taking these medications.

If you are uncertain how much pain medicine to take or how often, please call us.

If the pain is severe, not controlled with your medications, or persists, please call us.

ORAL HYGIENE

Proper oral hygiene is important because it helps reduce chances of an infection. Very gentle rinsing should begin the day of dental implant surgery. If you were given a prescription for mouth rinse, follow the instructions on the prescription. If you were not given one, rinse gently with warm salt water twice daily. You can brush your teeth the day after your dental implant surgery, but be careful not to traumatize the area where the surgery was performed.

DIET

If you had IV sedation or general anesthesia for dental implant placement, liquids should be initially taken. Your diet can then progress to more solids as tolerated; however, take special care to not chew directly on the implant site until directed otherwise. Ensure adequate fluids and nutrition to prevent dehydration.

NAUSEA AND VOMITING

After IV sedation or general anesthesia, some patients may feel nauseated and vomit. To help avoid this problem, do not take your medications on an empty stomach. Take sips of clear carbonated liquids such as ginger ale or 7Up®. Hold off on your medications, if possible, until nausea subsides. Try to stay hydrated with liquids. Sometimes patients feel nauseated from the prescribed pain medications, particularly the stronger pain medications such as hydrocodone or oxycodone (Norco® or Percocet®). Try stopping the pain medications and see if nausea subsides. If you have continued nausea and vomiting, call our office for further instructions.

BRUISING AND DISCOLORATION

After dental implant surgery, some patients may notice bruising or discoloration around the areas that the dental implants were placed. This is normal post-operatively and can take several days to subside.

JAW TIGHTNESS OR LIMITED MOUTH OPENING

This is normal following dental implant placement and will improve and resolve over time. On occasion, you may be shown jaw exercises to help increase your jaw opening.

DIZZINESS OR LIGHTEADEDNESS

After IV sedation or general anesthesia, some patients may feel dizzy when standing up. Always have someone watching you the first 24 hours after sedation. Do not get up quickly from a sitting or lying position, and make sure to remain hydrated with fluids.

SMOKING

Smoking can inhibit the healing process and can cause more pain after surgery. To ensure the best post-operative recovery, refrain from smoking for as long as possible after dental implant surgery.

If you have any questions or concerns following your dental implant surgery, please don't hesitate to call our office. We are on call 24 hours a day.