



Post-Operative Instructions: After Dental Implant Surgery

Sometimes the after-effects of surgery are quite minimal, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office. Please note that there is no additional charge for your post-operative care in this office!

Bleeding

In most cases, there will be minimal bleeding since the wound is often closed with sutures. If used, the sutures are usually the dissolving type which will fall out on their own 5-10 days after surgery. Some bleeding and oozing may be expected during the first 24 hours. Please keep firm biting pressure on the gauze pack over the surgery site for about one hour. Remove the gauze and then check the site for bleeding. If significant bleeding continues, a new gauze pack should be placed and firm pressure should be applied for one hour. Repeat as necessary. A tea bag can be used if your gauze supply runs low. Avoid vigorous chewing, spitting, or rinsing your mouth or sucking through a straw for 24 hours. Allowing the tissues to rest undisturbed assists the healing process. Avoid continually pulling at your lip to check the operative site.

Swelling

Depending on the procedure, you may or may not experience swelling. Swelling may be at a maximum about 2 or 3 days after surgery. Keeping your head elevated (in a recliner or on several pillows) will reduce swelling. Ice packs applied continuously are helpful for the first day or so.

Oral Hygiene

The day following your procedure, it is recommended that you begin rinsing your mouth with warm saltwater rinses (1 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water). Continue rinsing with the saltwater mixture approximately 3 or 4 times a day over the next few days following your surgery. Brush your teeth and gums as normal except be gentle in area where procedure was performed. Do not use a Waterpik® or like device or hydrogen peroxide rinses for at least 2 weeks following surgery. If so prescribed by your doctor, a chlorhexidine rinse may be used twice daily instead of salt water.

Diet

The day of your surgery, start with nourishing liquids and soft/colder foods, such as ice cream, pudding, yogurt, etc. Avoid extremely hot foods, foods with sharp edges (chips, pretzels, etc.), and do not chew immediately over the surgery area. Avoid straws for the first 24 hours. Gradually return to your normal diet as tolerated.

Activity

Limit physical activity during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Overexertion may lead to post-operative bleeding and discomfort. When you lie down, keep your head elevated on a pillow. You may wish to place a towel on your pillowcase to avoid staining from any blood-tainted saliva.

Smoking

It is advisable that you refrain from smoking for at least 3 days after the surgery, as this increases the risk of infection and may delay healing.

Pain

Initially, you may have some discomfort. Tylenol® or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen, Advil®, Motrin®, or Aleve®) may be used for pain. The pain will gradually diminish. If medication was prescribed, use it according to the directions as needed. Make sure you get some type of food or a drink in your stomach before taking your prescription pain medication, as otherwise, it can make you feel nauseated.

Dental Prosthesis

As was discussed at your pre-operative consultation, partial dentures, flippers, or full dentures should not be used after surgery unless otherwise advised by your doctor. These may need to be adjusted at or after your first post-operative return visit.

Post-Op Visits

It is important to return for your post-op visit, generally scheduled 1-2 weeks after treatment. Contact our office if you have questions or problems before that time.