

# Post-Operative Instructions: Dental Implants

## **FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY:**

Do not spit. Use a tissue to wipe your mouth as needed, or swallow your saliva. Do not use a drinking straw. Drink straight from the cup or use a spoon. Do not smoke. Keep fingers and tongue away from the surgical area.

## **Bleeding:**

Some minor bleeding is expected and will usually subside quickly and stop within an hour or two after surgery. A little oozing is normal and may persist for several hours.

Keep gauze on the surgical area with some biting pressure for 30-45 minutes and replace as needed. It is very important to place the gauze in the correct place with pressure and leave it undisturbed for at least 30 minutes.

## **Swelling:**

Some swelling is to be expected. It may be mild or severe and is different for every patient. The swelling may increase for the first 24-48 hours before it starts to go away. It may last for several days. Some bruising may develop on the face.

## **Diet:**

You may start with soft food such as mashed potatoes, pasta, cottage cheese, soup, or scrambled eggs as soon as the local anesthetic wears off. You may resume a regular diet as soon as you feel up for it; however, please try not to chew directly on the implant site(s) for at least 1 month.

## **Oral Hygiene:**

You may start rinsing tomorrow, gently, with warm salt water (1 tsp of salt in 8 ounces warm water). You may brush your teeth per usual, though be very careful near the surgical sites.

## **Sutures:**

Unless told otherwise, the sutures used are dissolvable and will fall out on their own. This generally occurs during the first week after surgery.

## **Bone Graft Material:**

If your surgeon placed bone graft material at the time the dental implant was placed, you might notice some gritty material in your mouth. This is nothing to worry about and may last 1-2 weeks.

## **Will I be able to see the implant?**

Depending on the location and stability of the implant being placed, your surgeon may opt to bury the implant under the gums. After 3-6 months of healing, you will return to have the implant uncovered so the implant can be restored (a tooth placed on the implant post).

If stability is optimal at the time of placement, the uncover surgery can be bypassed and a cap is placed on top of the implant that protrudes through the gum tissue. This cap will be visible to you. After 3-6 months of healing, the dentist can then restore the implant without the need for further surgery.

## **When can the crown be placed?**

A dental crown can be attached to the implant once the implant has fused to the bone. This varies from 3-6 months and varies from case to case.

## **Medications:**

You were probably given one or more prescriptions for medications. Take all as directed on the bottle. Stop taking the medications if you experience nausea or diarrhea, or cannot swallow your pills.

Antibiotics: Not all implant patients require antibiotics after surgery. If you were given antibiotics, continue until

the bottle is empty.

**Pain Medicine:** Most implants result in very little discomfort for 2-3 days. We do recommend that you take some pain medication for the first 24 hours however, preferably ibuprofen if you are able. Studies have repeatedly shown that a combination of acetaminophen (Tylenol) and Ibuprofen (Advil) provide excellent pain relief. If you continue to have severe pain and you were prescribed a narcotic pain medication (Norco, Hydrocodone, Percocet), you can take it together with ibuprofen. Do not take the narcotic pain medication with acetaminophen (tylenol) because most narcotic pain medications are mixed with acetaminophen already. Stop taking the narcotic pain medication as soon as possible and replace it with 500mg acetaminophen (Tylenol).

**Activity:**

No physical or strenuous activity for 48 hours. No swimming (ocean or pool) for 1 week.

You may then resume your normal activities as you feel up to it. Go easy at first with exercise and recreation, and increase your activity slowly over several days.

**Questions?**

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