

The following instructions may help you to care for your mouth following your periodontal surgery. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any last minute questions. We can be reached at 08 8981 9993 during regular business hours or by e-mail admin@darwinsmiles.com.au.

If you take medications such as Warfarin, Plavix® or other blood thinners, please do not discontinue these medications without first consulting your doctor.

We encourage you to have a light meal at least an hour prior to the procedure. Try to eat starchy or sugary foods such as bread, cereals, muffins or fruits.

Please wear loose fitting and comfortable clothing. You are welcome to bring earphones and listen to music during the procedure.

What You Should Know

- Only have cold drinks and do not eat until the local anaesthetic has worn off. Avoid hot drinks or food for the first day. Try not to disturb the area with your tongue or fingers. Don't undertake strenuous exercise for the first 48 hours (running / gym).
- You may have some swelling and/or bruising following your surgery - this usually reaches a peak 2 to 3 days later. This is quite normal and both will subside naturally after a few days. Swelling can be reduced with ice packs wrapped in a towel. Hold on the cheek area for a maximum of 10 minutes at a time with a 20 minute break. After 24 hours gentle heat is more beneficial. Sleeping propped up slightly on 2-3 pillows may also help.
- Your mouth may be sore for a few days after any surgery which should be easily managed with simple pain killers. You should take these regularly at the maximum stated dose for the first 2 days after your surgery. Take whatever painkillers you normally take for headaches, aches and sprains (ibuprofen and paracetamol make a good combination), and take your first dose before the local anaesthetic has completely worn off.
- If after a few days you experience increasing pain and swelling, you must return to our surgery as soon as possible so that we can ensure you are not beginning to develop an infection.
- Some minor bleeding after surgery is normal. If this persists, apply pressure by biting firmly down over the area on a dampened gauze swab for 60 minutes whilst sitting upright. Do not keep checking or changing the gauze. Contact us if bleeding persists for any reason after applying pressure in this way.

Cleaning

- Successful oral surgery depends on keeping the mouth as clean as possible.

- Please start to use your antibacterial mouthwash on the evening of your surgery and continue for 1 week. This is very important. You should gently bathe the surgical site by holding approximately 15ml over the site (the equivalent of half a cap-full) for at least 1 minute, 3 times a day, for 7 days.
- You should also start cleaning your other teeth as normal with a toothbrush, starting on the evening of your surgery. Avoid the surgical site for the first few days, but then begin to carefully clean this area as well when tenderness permits.
- Hot salty mouthwashes (a cup of hot water with a teaspoon of salt) are beneficial for healing in the first week. Ensure that the mouthwash is not so hot that it scalds and then hold the hot mouthwash over the surgical site until it cools. Repeat as often as possible.
- Try to keep food away from the surgical area for as long as possible. Rinse following eating to keep the area clean.
- You are advised not to smoke until the wound has healed as this severely limits healing in the mouth.

Infection

There is a low risk of infection associated with periodontal surgery. If bone grafts are part of your treatment plan then antibiotics will be prescribed as a preventive measure. Routine periodontal surgery does not require antibiotic coverage. If you notice an elevation in temperature, drainage or significant swelling, please call the office. Remember, swelling after the procedure is normal and usually peaks about 4 days after surgery. This usually resolves in a week or so.

Smoking

Besides all the long-term health effects that smoking can have on your body, it can dramatically impact on the stability of your teeth. Periodontal research has shown that patients who smoke can end up with significantly less teeth than non-smokers. Post operative sensitivity is also higher in smokers and healing is slower. Do what you can to kick the habit. We can start you on a smoking cessation programs too.

Numbness

There is a very, very low risk of permanent numbness to the gum tissues or skin surface after minor periodontal surgery. In most cases, this is a temporary phenomenon and has a very low incidence. We will do everything possible to limit the possibility of this happening.

Follow-up Appointments

It is important that you return for the following post-surgery appointments:

1) Removal of Sutures and Initial Healing Evaluation

This visit is usually one-two weeks following surgery unless indicated otherwise by the doctor. The visit is usually 10-20 minutes. In many cases the sutures dissolve on their own.

2) Evaluation of Result After Surgery

This visit takes place 6-12 weeks or more following surgery, depending on the advice given to you by your periodontist. At that time we will re-assess the treated area, polish your teeth (may have staining from the rinse used after your surgical procedure) and confirm that you are stable. Since personal oral hygiene is compromised while the sutures are in place, a professional cleaning will aid in the healing process by keeping bacteria from getting back under the gums.