



Post-Operative Instructions Loaded

After Placement of Dental Implants

The placement of a dental implant can be very simple or may be complicated depending on the circumstances of your case. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the instructions are followed carefully. There may be a metal healing abutment protruding through the gingival (gum) tissue at the implant site. It should be cleaned just like a tooth. You must be careful not to chew on the implant during the entire healing phase until the tooth is placed on the implant.

Immediately following surgery:

- **Bite on the gauze pad placed over the surgical site for an hour.** After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded and replaced by another gauze pad if the site is still bleeding. Refer to the section on BLEEDING for specific details.
- **Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery.** This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- **To minimize any swelling, place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed.** Refer to the section on SWELLING for explanation. Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as you can so it is digested before the local anesthetic has worn off. Having something of substance in the stomach to coat the stomach will help minimize nausea from the pain medications. Refer to the section on PAIN for specific details.
- **Restrict your activities the day of surgery** and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable. If you are active, your heart will be beating harder and you can expect excessive bleeding and throbbing from the wound.
- **NO SMOKING UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**
- Apply any gel or mouthwash to the area up to 4 times the day of surgery and as needed for up to 1 week after surgery. The **Stella Life gel or rinse** you have been given will greatly decrease swelling, pain and inflammation of the area. This product will also reduce the bacterial load in your mouth to help with faster healing.
- You have been given a loading dose antibiotic so there is no need to take the medication today but starting the day after surgery please take any prescribed antibiotic until you have completed the entire dose.
- If you are wearing a prosthetic, your implant is uncovered or your implants have been loaded (something is screwed into the implant the day of surgery)
 - **STAY ON A SOFT DIET OVER THE AREA FOR AT LEAST 8 WEEKS** for full mouth prosthetics
 - For single unit implants **DO NOT CHEW OVER THE IMPLANT FOR AT LEAST 8 WEEKS**
 - Caution must be used and you need to be aware of where food is being positioned when you are chewing

Bleeding:

- Generally **there is much less bleeding with implants than tooth extractions** because the implant fills the hole created in the bone. There is no open extraction site where a clot must form.
- **Biting on gauze is still important after surgery if the area is still bleeding after 1 hour.** The pressure keeps the adjacent gum pushed tightly against the bone and that minimizes bleeding under the gum around the implants. Some bleeding or redness in the saliva is normal for 24 hours.
- Excessive bleeding (your mouth fills up rapidly with blood) can be controlled by biting on a gauze pad placed directly on the bleeding wound for 60 minutes. Repeat as needed every hour for 6 - 8 hours.
- If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. Tannic acid in the tea bag helps form a blood clot by constricting blood vessels.
- To minimize further bleeding, sit upright, do not be excited, maintain constant pressure on the gauze (no talking or chewing) and minimize physical exercise. If bleeding persists please call our office for further instructions.

Swelling:

- The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. **Placement of a dental implant generally does not produce much swelling** so it may not be necessary to use ice at all. If your surgery involves the extraction of multiple teeth and placement of multiple implants, swelling or bruising is to be expected and may last for up to 3 days. The bruising will fade and get better over the next 7 days.
- If there was a fair amount of cheek retraction involved with your implant procedure, then it would be appropriate to apply ice on the outside of the face on the affected side. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2 - 3 days post - operatively.
- The swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Sealed plastic bags filled with ice, ice packs, or a bag of frozen peas or corn wrapped in a washcloth should be applied to the side of the face where surgery was performed.
- **The ice packs should be applied 20 minutes on/20 minutes off for the afternoon and evening immediately following your extraction.** After 24 hours, ice has no beneficial effect.
- Thirty - six (36) hours following surgery the application of moist heat to the side of the face may help some in reducing the size of any swelling that has formed. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm. Soft, puffy swelling that you can indent with your finger after oral surgery is very normal.
- Bright red, rock hard, hot swelling that does not indent with finger pressure which is getting bigger by the hour would suggest infection. This usually would develop around day 3 - 4 after surgery when you would expect swelling to be going down, not up.

Temperature:

- **It is normal to run a low grade temperature (99 - 100F) for 7 - 10 days following oral surgery.** This reflects your immune response to the normal bacteria that are present in your mouth. A high temperature (>101F) might exist for a 6 - 8 hours after surgery but no more than that.
- 2 Tylenol or 2 - 4 Ibuprofen every 4 - 6 hours will help to moderate a temperature.
- A temperature >101F several days after surgery, especially if accompanied by rock hard swelling and increased pain, is usually indicative of infection. You should call the office for instructions if this should occur.

Pain:

- **Pain or discomfort following surgery may last up to 4 - 5 days.** For most patients, it seems they rely mainly on Tylenol or Ibuprofen by the second day.
- If prescription pain medications are required beyond 4 days, further treatment may be indicated. Please call the office and discuss your situation with us.
- Many **medications for pain can cause nausea or vomiting.** It is wise to have something of substance in the stomach (yogurt, ice cream, pudding or apple sauce) before taking prescription pain medicines and/or over the counter pain medicines (especially aspirin or ibuprofen). Even coating the stomach with Pepto Bismol or Milk of Magnesia can help prevent or moderate nausea.
- **For moderate pain,** one or two tablets of Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol may be taken every three to four hours or Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) 800mg tablets may be taken every 6 hours.

- **Using the provided Stella Life gel or rinse will dramatically help with the pain and may result in the use of pain medication not to be needed.**
- For severe pain take the narcotic type tablets prescribed (either tylenol#3 or Norco) for pain as directed every 4 hours in addition to the Ibuprofen. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes.
 - **Do not drive an automobile or work around or operate heavy machinery if you are taking prescription pain medicine.**
 - **Alcohol and prescription pain medicines do not mix!**

Antibiotics:

- If you are prescribed antibiotics be sure to take **the prescribed antibiotics as directed until they are completely gone** regardless of how good you may feel to help prevent infection.

Diet:

- **Chew where your natural teeth are and not on the dental implant throughout the whole healing phase.**
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Try to drink 5 - 6 eight ounce glasses the first day.
- Drink from a glass or cup and don't use a straw. The sucking motion will suck out the healing blood clot and start the bleeding again.
- **Avoid hot liquids or food** while you are numb so you don't burn yourself.
- **Soft food and liquids can be eaten on the day of surgery.**
- **Return to a normal diet as soon as possible** unless otherwise directed. You will find eating multiple small meals is easier than three regular meals for the first few days.
- You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat.

Oral Hygiene:

- Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing.
- Brushing your teeth and the healing abutments is no problem. **Be gentle initially with brushing the surgical areas but do not avoid them.**
- Warm salt water rinses (teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) or plain water should be used at least 4 - 5 times a day especially after meals starting the day after surgery.
- In most cases you will be instructed to use the prescribed Oral Rinse or Gel.. The day of or after surgery, the rinse should be used twice daily, after breakfast and before bed. Be sure to rinse for at least 2 minutes then spit it out.
- The Gel may be used multiple times a day for hygiene and pain control.

Smoking:

- **Smoking suppresses healing dramatically.** Nicotine constricts blood vessels which slows the healing of surgery sites and affects the long term health of the gum and bone.
- **Smoking and dental implants do not mix.** There is a documented increased failure rate of implants in patients who smoke. Therefore, **the implant companies will not honor any of the replacement warranties on implants in patients who smoke.**
- If you choose to smoke, you do so at the risk of losing your dental implants due to poor healing and increased gum disease in smokers.

Activity:

- You should keep physical activities to a minimum for 6 - 12 hours following surgery.
- If you are considering exercise, throbbing or bleeding may occur. If this occurs, you should discontinue exercising.
- Keep in mind that you are probably not taking normal nourishment. This may weaken you and further limit your ability to exercise

Wearing your Prosthesis:

- **Partial dentures, flippers, or full dentures should not be used immediately after surgery unless you are instructed to do so.** Biting directly on the gauze will stop bleeding faster and prevent bleeding under the gums around the implant.
- **Do not wear your prosthetic until we have instructed you to wear it.**
- In all cases you should remember that the **prosthesis is for esthetics only and not for vigorous chewing.** You want to **minimize vigorous chewing** of any kind on the healing cap or over the submerged implants during the entire healing phase which consists of the first 2 weeks for soft tissue.

Protection of implants

- Chewing over a dental implant can cause the implant to be overloaded and cause failure of the implant.
- In some cases the implant will be buried beneath the tissue and will not be as likely to be subjected to forces. If you are wearing a denture over the implants even under the tissue please be aware that chewing with the denture for the 2 weeks following surgery is not recommended. Giving the tissue 2 weeks of rest reduces the likelihood of the surgical area opening prematurely.
- If the implant is not buried beneath the tissue and there is a prosthetic component please through the gum or if the implant is loaded with a temporary restoration, **DO NOT CHEW WITH IT, DO NOT BITE WITH IT AND DO NOT APPLY PRESSURE** to the prosthetic with your tongue. Doing so can dislodge the implant and break it lose especially 2 - 6 weeks following the placement.