



Post-Operative Instructions: Dental Implants

Please follow these instructions closely to support a smooth recovery.

Bleeding

Some bleeding or redness in your saliva is normal and to be expected for the first 48 hours. If there is excessive bleeding, bite down on gauze placed over the surgical site, keeping it in place for 30 minutes. After this, the gauze can be exchanged every 30 minutes and replaced until the bleeding slows down or the gauze is pink.

Swelling & Bruising

Swelling is expected and typically peaks 3 to 5 days after surgery. Some bruising may also occur, which is normal. For the first 24 hours, apply an ice pack to the outside of your face in 20-minutes-on, 20-minutes-off intervals.

Pain Management

Take 600 mg of ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin), ideally before the numbness wears off — usually 1 to 2 hours after surgery. Three hours later, take 500–1000 mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol). Continue alternating between 600 mg ibuprofen and 500–1000 mg acetaminophen every 3 hours as needed for pain control. If your pain isn't controlled and you were prescribed a narcotic pain medication, you may take this in place of the acetaminophen. We recommend eating or drinking something before taking any pain medication to help avoid an upset stomach. Do not operate a motor vehicle or machinery, or consume alcohol, while taking narcotic pain medication.

Antibiotics

If you were prescribed an antibiotic, take it as directed to help prevent infection. If you develop a rash or other unfavorable reaction, stop taking it and call our office right away.

Diet

On the day of surgery, drink plenty of liquids and eat soft foods. Good options include protein drinks, mashed potatoes, pasta, eggs, soup, yogurt, soft fruits, etc. Avoid hot liquids for one week. The day after surgery, advance your diet as tolerated, but avoid directly biting on the surgical site until the crown (tooth) is placed.

Caring for the Implant Site

Your implant needs time to bond with the surrounding bone, so it's important to avoid disturbing the area while it heals. You may notice a healing abutment (a small metal cap) protruding through the gums — this is normal and expected. Avoid touching or applying direct pressure to the surgical site.

Oral Hygiene

Rinse gently with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon of salt dissolved in 8 oz of warm water) at least 4 to 5 times a day, especially after meals, or chlorhexidine mouthrinse, if prescribed. Brush and floss your teeth normally, but initially be gentle over the surgical site and healing abutment.

Smoking & Vaping

Avoid smoking or vaping for at least 48 hours after surgery, though ideally for 2 full weeks or longer. Smoking significantly increases the risk of implant failure, since it interferes with the bone's ability to properly bond with the implant.

Activity

The day of surgery, avoid strenuous activities and heavy lifting, since these can increase bleeding. Resume normal activities as tolerated.

Sutures (Stitches)

If you had stitches placed, they typically dissolve on their own within 7 to 10 days. If they come out sooner than that, there's no need to worry.

If You Had a Sinus Lift Bone Graft

If your procedure included a sinus lift bone graft, please also follow the Sinus Precautions post-operative instructions, which you may have already received, or which are also available on our website.

Questions before your visit? Call us at (847) 367-4190.

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