

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR HOME CARE COMFORT  
AFTER DENTAL IMPLANT SURGERY

When you get home, remove the gauze from your mouth but do not disturb the wound. Eat something soft and then take your prescribed medications. Avoid rinsing, spitting, or touching the wound on the day of the surgery.

**1. PAIN**

Discomfort is usually strongest during the first 24 hours. **If you take the first pain pill before the local anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.** For mild discomfort, use an over-the-counter medication like Tylenol, Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), aspirin or Aleve as directed on the bottle. Do not take any of the above medications if you are allergic or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it. Most pain medication can upset the stomach, especially if it is empty. You can prevent an upset stomach by drinking ginger ale (do not use a straw) and then taking the first dose of pain medication 15 minutes later. Do not mix alcohol with any medication.

**2. BLEEDING**

A certain amount of bleeding for 24 hours is NORMAL following the operation. Blood tinted saliva may be seen for about 36 hours. If HEAVY bleeding occurs after you return home, place a small, moistened gauze pad (about the size of a tea bag) or a moistened teabag directly over the area for at least 20 minutes, holding it in place with moderate biting pressure. You must apply pressure in order for it to be effective. It may be necessary to repeat this procedure. If heavy bleeding continues, call the office. Do not smoke for at least 1 week following the surgery. Spitting and excessive physical activity tend to increase and prolong bleeding. A semi-reclining position and rest for the first few hours is recommended. Avoid alcohol for a few days.

**3. ANTIBIOTICS**

Take the prescribed antibiotics as directed by the doctor to help prevent infection.

**4. DO NOT DISTURB THE IMPLANT SITE**

DO NOT brush the implant. DO NOT bite on the implant. Do not disturb it. Keep fingers, toothpicks, or other matter that may cause infection out of the mouth. Keep your tongue away from the implant site.

**5. MOUTH RINSING**

DO NOT RINSE the mouth for at least 24 hours. You may then GENTLY rinse the mouth with warm saltwater a couple of times a day. If bleeding continues, stop all mouth rinsing and follow instructions in paragraph 2 regarding bleeding. **Do not rinse with any commercial mouthwashes (i.e., Listerine, Scope, etc.).** After 24 hours, you may gently brush the teeth that are not close to the area of surgery.

## 6. SWELLING

To help minimize standard expected immediate postoperative swelling, apply an ice pack or bag of frozen peas to the face over the operated area (**15 minutes on, then 15 minutes off**) for the **first 24 hours only** following the procedure. Using ice longer can prolong the healing period. Be aggressive with this therapy, as it will diminish the overall amount of swelling and pain. Elevate your head for the first 2 days. It is **NORMAL** to have swelling on the second and third day. On the **FOURTH DAY (NOT BEFORE!)** after surgery, apply warm, moist heat (plug-in heating pad) to the face to help diminish the swelling and to help resolve any external bruising. Continue to use the heat as long as the soreness remains.

## 7. ACTIVITY

Following surgery, allow time for rest. Keep your head elevated when lying down. No smoking or drinking alcohol. Smoking and heavy drinking greatly increase the risk of dental implant failure. **IF YOU HAVE HAD A GENERAL ANESTHETIC OR IV SEDATION** in conjunction with your surgery, you should not drive any vehicle or attempt any hazardous tasks for at least 24 hours. Similar recommendations apply if you are taking prescription pain medication.

## 8. WEARING YOUR DENTURES

Leave them out as much as possible. If the doctor allows you to wear them after surgery, use them for cosmetic purposes only. **DO NOT** chew hard foods with them for the first 3 months. They may need to be adjusted by your restorative dentist after your surgical appointment.

## 9. DIET

It is important to maintain a good diet. A liquid to soft diet high in calories and protein is advisable for the first day or so. You should drink **PLENTY** of fluids (8 glasses or more per day). **DO NOT USE A STRAW**. Call the office if nausea or vomiting persists. Do not use a denture or flipper for chewing. Avoid wearing a denture or flipper until approved by this office.

### **Dietary Suggestions for Surgical Patients**

For the first day after surgery, your diet should be soft and cool to warm. Some suggested foods are:

Soda & Natural Juice  
Baby Food  
Milkshakes & Ice Cream  
Yogurt

Blended Fruits & Vegetables  
Applesauce  
Mashed Potatoes  
Cottage Cheese

### **Diet for One Week**

Your diet for the first day and until your sutures are removed should be soft.

Milk  
Yogurt

Blended Fresh Fruits & Vegetables  
Plenty of Fluids

Cheese  
Cooked Cereals  
Soup  
Pasta

Eggs, any style  
Soup  
Fish  
Ground Beef

**Avoid:**

- A. HOT FOODS & DRINKS for 24 hours, as they tend to stimulate bleeding.
- B. CHEWING ON THE SIDE OF THE IMPLANT SITE.
- C. Using straws.
- D. Foods that are spicy, hard, sticky or rough to chew during the first **2-3 months** after surgery, or until otherwise instructed. Such foods include:

Popcorn

Nuts or Sesame Seeds

Pizza

Hard Candy

Dried Fruits

Peanut Butter

Hard Breads

Gum

**10. SUTURES**

If sutures are placed in the area of surgery, they are to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become loose but this is no cause for alarm. If a suture comes out completely, just remove it from your mouth and discard it. Any remaining sutures will be removed approximately 1-2 weeks after surgery.

**11. PAIN AND SWELLING**

If pain or swelling occurs after the wound has apparently healed, call the office.

**12. NAUSEA**

Pain medication, antibiotics and small amounts of swallowed blood all tend to upset an empty stomach and may provoke nausea and vomiting. If nausea occurs, drinking 2 ounces of a carbonated drink, such as 7-Up or Ginger Ale, every hour for 6 hours will usually eliminate nausea. **DO NOT USE A STRAW.** Follow this with mild tea or clear soup, etc. If nausea continues, contact the office.

**13. UNUSUAL COMPLICATIONS**

Feel free to contact us with questions about your progress and recovery. Call the office if you develop signs of infection, have excessive bleeding or pain, difficulty breathing, skin eruptions or pain or swelling at the IV site.

**14. FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT**

Please be sure to keep your post-operative follow-up appointment as scheduled.

**15. SINUS PRECAUTIONS**

Because of the close relationship to the sinus and nasal cavity, when a dental implant is placed in the upper jaw, it may leave a communication between

the mouth and the sinus or nasal cavity. This will usually close with time. It is important to follow these instructions:

- A. Take all prescriptions as directed.
- B. Refrain from blowing your nose for two weeks.
- C. Avoid applying pressure over your sinuses.
- D. Refrain from using straws or smoking.
- E. Eat soft foods for several days. Chew on the opposite side as much as possible.
- F. Do not rinse the mouth vigorously for several days.

It is NORMAL to have a slight amount of bleeding from the nose for several days.

YOU MAY EXPERIENCE:

1. The swelling will reach its peak about 72 hours after surgery.
2. Trismus (tightness) of the muscles may cause difficulty in opening the mouth.
3. You may have a slight earache.
4. A temporary sore throat may develop.
5. Numbness about the corner of the mouth, on the side of the bone graft, may develop.
6. Your other teeth may ache temporarily. We refer to this as a sympathetic pain and it is a temporary condition.
7. If the corners of the mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with a cream or ointment.
8. Black and blue discoloration (bruising) may occur.
9. There may be a slight elevation in temperature for 24 to 48 hours. If this continues, please notify us.

**PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

We are interested in your speedy and comfortable recovery. Do not hesitate to call this office for any problems or questions. Call us at (831) 757-3021, (831) 884-5069, or our answering service at (831) 758-7641.