

# 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.
- Do not smoke.
- Keep fingers and tongue away from the surgical area.

Spitting, the use of a straw, smoking, and poking the surgical area can dislodge the blood clot that is forming and will cause bleeding from the area. Also, smoking can increase the chances of an infection.

## BLEEDING:

Some minor bleeding is expected after dental implant surgery. It 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.

## SWELLING:

Most patients will experience some swelling after surgery in the mouth. 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 also develop on the face.

## DIET:

You may start with non-abrasive foods 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 to it; however, please try not to chew directly on the implant sites.

## ORAL HYGIENE:

You may brush your teeth per usual, though be very careful near the surgical sites. After 2 days, you may start rinsing, very gently, with some warm salt water (1 tbsp of salt in 8 ounces of warm water).

## SUTURES:

Unless told otherwise, the sutures used during your procedure are dissolvable and will fall out on their own. This generally occurs in the first week after surgery, but timing varies from 4–10 days.

## BONE GRAFT MATERIAL:

If bone graft material was placed at the time the dental implant was placed, you might notice some gritty material in your mouth. It is safe to swallow this. This is nothing to worry about and should subside within a day or two.

## WHEN CAN THE CROWN BE PLACED?

A dental crown can be attached to a dental implant once the implant has fused to the bone. This is a process called osseointegration.

The length of time the bone must heal varies from case to case and will be discussed with your surgeon. The length of time needed for osseointegration is a function of the bone quality, quantity, and implant stability at the time of placement. Typical wait time for osseointegration is around 3-4 months.

## MEDICATIONS:

- **Antibiotics:** Continue until the bottle is empty. Do not quit halfway.
- **Pain Medicine:** Usually it is necessary to take pain medication in a scheduled fashion (every 4–6 hours) for the first 24 hours and as needed thereafter. Remember that pain medication can make you drowsy, so no driving, swimming, operating machinery, or drinking alcoholic beverages while you are taking them.

**Alternative pain medication:** 500 mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or 600 mg ibuprofen (Advil) alternating every 4-6 hours as needed.

Please do not exceed 3,000 mg of acetaminophen per day.

## ACTIVITY:

Once you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication, you may 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 back to your normal routine.

Please follow these instructions as closely as possible. They are designed to help you heal quickly and comfortably.