

Lawrence Dental Group

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Implant and/or Bone Graft Post-Op Instructions

Following surgery, the last thing you want to worry about is a complication due to poor post-operative care. The implant does require a clean environment in order to heal properly. Following these instructions will aid in the healing process and greatly reduce the risk of complications.

Bleeding, Swelling & Pain - Immediately After Surgery

First and foremost, after placement of dental implants, do not disturb the wound. That means avoiding any rinsing, spitting, or touching of the wound on the day of surgery. Your doctor may even advise you to avoid nose-blowing in some cases.

Bleeding: Keep steady pressure over the surgical site following the procedure. Pressure helps reduce bleeding and permits the formation of a clot. Gently remove the gauze after 30 minutes. If bleeding persists, place more gauze and again keep steady pressure on the area for another 30 minutes. Blood or redness in the saliva is normal. If bleeding continues, we recommend calling the office for further instructions.

It's a good idea to limit or reduce your oral activity as much as possible for several hours after surgery. Avoid any unnecessary eating, drinking and talking. These oral activities may hinder proper healing, especially in the first few hours.

Swelling: Any swelling can be minimized by applying an icepack, on the cheek or on the jaw directly, in the area of surgery. If an icepack is unavailable, simply fill a heavy plastic bag with crushed ice. Secure the end, and cover with a soft cloth to avoid skin irritation. Frozen bags of peas make wonderful icepacks and can be refrozen and used repeatedly. Immediately following the procedure, it's advisable to apply the icepack over the affected area - 20 minutes on, and 20 minutes off - for two to four hours, to help prevent the development or excessive swelling and discomfort. Apply the ice as often as necessary for the first 24 hours ONLY. You may expect swelling for up to 10 days. Remember, in terms of compresses and foods, administer cold items for the first 24 hours and then warm afterward.

Pain: To minimize any discomfort from the pain, before the anesthesia wears off and feeling has returned to normal, begin taking medication as directed by your doctor. For moderate pain, over-the-counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen is advisable. For severe pain, the prescribed medication should be taken as directed.

Prescribed antibiotics help prevent infection and are usually started immediately following implant surgery, and continued for about a week afterward.

Ongoing Oral Hygiene

Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. Avoid using an electric toothbrush or water flossing device for the first few days. You'll need to brush and floss gently, which is more difficult with those devices. Gently rinse warm salt water after meals (a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) and rinse with the prescribed Peridex 3 times per day until the bottle is empty. Wait until 24 hours after surgery to start the rinses to minimize chance of disturbing the blood clot. Rinse with salt water after every meal or snack for 7 days. Rinsing is important because it removes food particles and debris and thus helps promote healing.

You can also brush your tongue with a dry toothbrush to keep bacteria growth down, but be careful not to touch the surgical site. Resume your regular tooth brushing, but avoid the surgical site.

Diet

Eating might seem like the last thing on your mind after dental surgery, but it's still important to nourish your body. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid hot liquids or food. Soft, cool foods and liquids should be consumed on the day of surgery, returning to a semi normal diet over the course of two weeks.

WARNING: for two weeks after surgery do not eat or drink:

- Hard foods – Don't chew on nuts, ice, hard candy, or other such hard foods, as this could damage your implant.
- Crunchy foods – You should avoid crunchy foods like chips and popcorn to make sure you heal quickly.
- Tough & chewy foods – Very tough, chewy foods like jerky, steak, and raw vegetables are not usually a good choice after surgery.
- Spicy & Acidic foods – Very spicy or acidic foods will irritate your surgical site and cause pain and discomfort. Avoid these foods until your mouth has healed.
- Sticky foods – Sticky foods like caramel and taffy require a lot of chewing, and can stick to your implant and the surgical site, increasing the risk of an infection.
- Also Avoid: Popcorn and anything w/small seeds or nuts. These can get stuck around implant and/or bone graft site and cause infection.

The day of your surgery and for the first 24 hours following, it's a good idea to give your teeth a bit of a break. For this reason, cold soups, smoothies, jello/puddings, and cold drinks should be your main dietary intake. And remember, refrain from using a straw, because the sucking action can cause excess strain, move the newly formed blood clot, and delay your ultimate recovery.

Food Suggestions For Day 1: Cold Pasta, Cold Soups, Cold Pudding, Mashed Potatoes, Jell-O, Yogurt, Milkshakes (do not use straw), Nutritional Supplement Drinks

Food Suggestions For Days 2-7: Omelettes, Scrambled eggs, Soft French Toast, Hot Oatmeal, Pancakes, Macaroni and cheese, Meatloaf, Grilled Cheese, Baked potato, Baked Sweet Potato, Cheeses, Warm pasta dishes, Warm soups, Steamed or baked fish fillets, Soft chicken dishes, Bananas

As you near the end of the first week, you may begin to chew carefully near the implant site. The area may feel tender or bruised. If it is painful (more than a slight discomfort), don't hesitate to contact our office.

Wearing Your Prosthesis

Partial or full dentures should not be used immediately after surgery, and for at least 10 days, unless you are told otherwise by your doctor.

Activity

It's wise to keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery. Rest up and heal; otherwise you could be setting your recovery back by a few days. If you engage in vigorous exercise, throbbing or bleeding at the surgical site may occur. If this happens, you should discontinue exercising. Keep in mind that you are probably not taking in the normal amount of calories for normal exercise. This may weaken you and further limit your ability.

Remember your follow-up visit: You will be scheduled to return for a post-operative visit to make certain healing is progressing satisfactorily. While you wait for that appointment, maintain a healthful diet, observe the basic rules for proper oral hygiene, and call the office if you have any questions or concerns.

Post-Op Care Recap

1. **Don't Touch!** Keep fingers and tongue away from surgical site.
2. **Cool it!** Use ice pack on surgical area (side of face) for the first 12 hours; apply ice 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off. Bags of frozen peas work quite well for this.
3. **Still Hurts?** For mild discomfort, take Tylenol or Ibuprofen as directed.
4. **Hydrate Yourself.** Drink plenty of fluids. Do not use a straw. Avoid hot liquids and anything acidic.
5. **Eat Soft Foods.** Diet may consist of soft foods, which can be easily chewed and swallowed. No seeds, nuts, rice, or popcorn!
6. **Blood?** A certain amount of bleeding can be expected following surgery. Bleeding is controlled by applying pressure to the surgical area for 30 minutes. If bleeding persists, a moist teabag should be held firmly on the area of bleeding for one hour straight.

7. **No Smoking!** DO NOT SMOKE or use chewing tobacco for at least seven days after surgery. Consider quitting these habits for a seamless recovery.

8. **Drugs?** If you are on other medications, be sure to discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist to minimize adverse drug interactions. Do start taking a multi-vitamin daily, if you are not already doing so.