

## DENTAL IMPLANT HOME CARE GUIDE

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Please seek the doctor's opinion when you have problems, questions, or observations.  
If you feel that there is an emergency, please call 911 or go to the Emergency Room.



### WHAT TO DO

#### ORAL HYGIENE CARE

You may brush your teeth and tongue after surgery and when bleeding has stopped. You should avoid the surgical site(s) for the few days, however. You may also start rinsing your mouth when the bleeding has stopped, spitting gently into the sink. Rinses should be done at least 2-3 times a day, especially after eating. Smoking will slow healing, causing more pain and increase the chance of dry sockets. We strongly discourage smoking during the healing phase. In most cases, tap water or salt water are ok for rinses. Antiseptic mouthrinses are ok too, but avoid alcohol-formulated varieties. Other prescription mouthrinses should be used as directed and should be done at the end of your oral hygiene routine.

#### IMPLANT SURGICAL SITE

In some cases, the implant is intended to heal underneath the gums. In other cases, a 'healing abutment' may be placed on top of the implant and erupt through the gums at the surgical site. Take care of this area and be gentle with chewing. In most cases, you will notice sutures/stitches in the area. In most cases, these are 'dissolving' and will fall out. Otherwise, they will need to be removed at a follow-up appointment.



### WHAT CAN I EAT

#### DIET

Liquids and soft foods may be eaten after surgery and when bleeding has stopped. While still numb, avoid hot foods. Avoid thick liquids through a straw for the first few days after surgery. It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to limit the first few days intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods. It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. For diabetic patients, keep watch on your blood sugar as your diet may be quite different.



### AVOID HEAVY ACTIVITIES

#### ACTIVITIES

For the first day, especially after anesthesia, rest and only light activity is recommended. Bending, lifting, or strenuous activity will result in increased bleeding, swelling and pain. Change positions and move carefully to avoid fainting. If you exercise regularly, be aware that your normal fluid and caloric intake is reduced. Exercise after surgery may also result in increased bleeding, swelling and discomfort. Heavy exercise should be avoided for 3-4 days following surgery.



### ANTIBIOTICS & PROBIOTICS

#### ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics may be prescribed in certain situations. If recommended, be sure to finish the entire antibiotic prescription unless otherwise directed.

#### PROBIOTICS

Probiotics, a natural type of yeast and bacteria, may prevent or relieve some side effects of antibiotics such as nausea, stomach upset, and diarrhea. Probiotics are considered safe and are naturally contained in products such as yogurt. Probiotics also come in several other forms and can be obtained over-the-counter at your local pharmacy.



## NEXT STEP

### FOLLOW UP

In most cases, a follow-up visit is needed to check healing and discuss further steps. The first visit is generally 3-4 weeks after implant placement for an initial wound-check. After 2-4 months, a follow-up appointment with an Xray is generally performed to check for proper bone healing.



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE THESE

### BLEEDING

Immediately after surgery, place a folded gauze square and put light pressure on the implant surgical area. Hold the gauze in place for 30 minutes as best you can, then remove and check for continued bleeding/oozing. If active bleeding persists, place new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 minutes) until bleeding has virtually stopped. The gauze may either be dry or moist when applied, depending on comfort.

Continued slow bleeding/oozing can occur after surgery, and it is not uncommon for this to occur 24 to 48 hours after surgery. Keep in mind that a little bit of blood mixed with saliva looks like more blood than there actually is. However, bleeding should never be severe. If so, check to see how the gauze packs are placed. If bleeding persists, sit upright or in a recliner, avoid physical activity, use ice packs and bite on gauze for 1 hour or on a moistened black/green tea bag for 30 minutes. Ingredients in the tea leaves help promote blood clotting. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office or seek urgent care.

### SWELLING

Swelling is a normal occurrence after surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days after surgery. Using a cold pack or ice applied firmly to the cheek next to the surgical area can minimize this. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery (switching spots to avoid frost bite). If you have been prescribed medicine for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed.

### NAUSEA

Nausea and vomiting can occur as a result of swallowed blood, discomfort, anesthesia or pain medicines. Post-operative nausea is usually self-limiting and sipping on flat cola or ginger ale often helps. Soda crackers also may be used. If nausea persists, stop taking the pain medicine and substitute an over the counter pain medicine for the next dose. If nausea persists call our office.

### BRUISING

Skin coloration and bruising can occur due to surgical bleeding under the tissues. Fair-skinned patients are more susceptible and bruises appear 2 to 3 days after surgery. Application of warm, moist heat may help speed up the healing process.

### SHARP EDGES

Sometimes there may be sharp edges or spots in the surgical area when any bone surgery is needed. Also, small slivers of bone may work themselves out during the following week or so. If these areas cause concern or discomfort, please seek follow up care with us, if not already scheduled.

### DRY LIPS

If the corners of your mouth are stretched they may dry out and crack. Keep your lips moist with an ointment such as Vaseline.

### SORE THROAT

This is not uncommon after surgery. The muscles get swollen and this may make swallowing painful. This should go away on its own in 2-3 days. However, the soreness should never be severe. Call our office or seek urgent care if you are unable to swallow or breath due to pain

### STIFF JAW

Swollen jaw muscles may limit your ability to open your mouth fully. This is a normal after surgery and usually resolves within a week. Performing jaw-stretching exercises may help, but do this after a few days of healing.

### BONE GRAFT MATERIAL

If your surgeon placed bone graft material during the procedure, you might notice some gritty material in your mouth. These tiny particles are graft material that has escaped the surgical site. This is nothing to worry about and should subside within a day or two.