OnSite SURGICAL PARTNERS

Post-Operative Instructions

Dental Implants and Bone Grafting

Implant surgery is usually more comfortable than patients expect. Following these instructions protects your implant while it bonds to the bone. Please also review our **Managing Pain After Oral Surgery** handout.

The Day of Surgery

- If you received sedation, a responsible adult must drive you home and stay with you. Do not drive, operate machinery, or make important decisions for 24 hours.
- Do not rinse, spit, or touch the surgical area today. Let saliva and blood-tinged saliva fall from your mouth or swallow it.
- Do not pull your lip or cheek to look at the area. This can tear the stitches and open the wound.
- Limit physical activity for 48–72 hours. Exertion can restart bleeding and increase swelling.
- Sleep with your head elevated on two pillows for the first 2–3 nights.

Bleeding

- Minor bleeding or oozing for the first 24 hours is normal.
- If bleeding continues, place a fresh, slightly moistened gauze over the area and bite with **firm pressure for 30–45 minutes** without checking it. Checking too often prevents a clot from forming.
- For persistent oozing, bite on a moistened black tea bag wrapped in gauze for 30 minutes.

Swelling and Bruising

- Apply ice to the outside of your face, **20 minutes on, 20 minutes off**, for the first 24–36 hours while awake.
- Swelling usually peaks on day 2–3, then improves. After 48 hours, warm, moist compresses can help.
- Bruising of the face may appear and is normal. It fades within 1–2 weeks.

What You May See

- Depending on your treatment, the implant may be fully covered by gum tissue, or a small metal **healing cap** may be visible through the gum. Both are normal.
- If bone graft material was placed, a few small, sand-like granules may come out over the first few days. This is normal.
- If you have stitches, they will dissolve in 1–2 weeks unless you are told otherwise.

Diet

- Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid hot drinks and foods until the numbness has worn off.
- Eat soft, cool foods for the first several days, such as yogurt, smoothies (with a spoon), eggs, pasta, fish, and mashed potatoes.
- **Do not chew on the implant site until your surgeon clears you**, typically at your follow-up visit. Pressure on a healing implant can cause it to fail.
- Avoid hard, crunchy, and sticky foods, as well as popcorn, nuts, and small seeds.
- Do not use a straw for at least 3 days.
- Avoid alcohol for 48 hours and while taking any prescription pain medication.

Oral Hygiene

A clean mouth is essential to prevent infection and protect your implant.

- **Starting the day after surgery:** gently rinse with warm salt water (½ teaspoon salt in an 8 oz glass of water) after every meal and at bedtime for 7–10 days. Let the water fall from your mouth rather than spitting forcefully.
- If you were prescribed chlorhexidine (Peridex) rinse, use it as directed. It can temporarily stain teeth; this polishes off.
- Brush and floss your other teeth normally. Do not brush the surgical site for the first 3 days, then brush very gently with a soft toothbrush. A visible healing cap may be gently brushed after day 3.
- Do not use a Waterpik or electric toothbrush near the site until cleared.

Smoking and Vaping

Do not smoke or vape for at least 2 weeks. Smoking significantly increases the risk of infection and implant failure. If you need help quitting, ask your physician or pharmacist about nicotine replacement, or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Medications

- Take pain medication as described in our pain management handout.
- If prescribed antibiotics, take every dose until the bottle is finished, even if you feel fine.
- Yogurt with live cultures or a probiotic may help prevent antibiotic-related stomach upset. Take probiotics at least 2 hours apart from your antibiotic.
- **Stop the antibiotic and call your dental office** if you develop a rash, hives, or severe or watery diarrhea.
- Continue your regular medications (for blood pressure, diabetes, etc.) on their normal schedule unless instructed otherwise.
- Most antibiotics do not reduce the effectiveness of birth control. If you have concerns, ask your pharmacist or use a backup method for the rest of your cycle.

Dentures, Flippers, and Night Guards

- Do not wear a denture, partial, flipper, or night guard over the surgical area until instructed. If you were told you may wear it, wait until the numbness has fully worn off.
- The appliance **must not press on the surgical site**. Pressure can open the incision, expose bone graft, and cause the implant to fail.
- If it rocks, rubs, or causes a sore spot, stop wearing it and contact your dental office to have it adjusted.

If an Upper Back Implant or Sinus Lift Was Done

For 2 weeks: do not blow your nose, sneeze with your mouth open, and avoid swimming, flying, and heavy lifting unless cleared. A small amount of blood from the nose is normal for the first few days.

Follow-Up

- Your surgeon will check your healing at your follow-up visit.
- Your implant typically needs 3–6 months to bond to the bone before your final tooth (crown) is made. Your crown or bridge will be completed by your restorative dental office.

When to Call Your Dental Office

Call the dental office where your procedure was done if you have:

- Bleeding that is not controlled after two 45-minute rounds of firm gauze pressure
- Fever above 101°F, or chills
- Swelling that is still increasing after day 3, or pus or a bad taste from the site
- Pain that gets worse after day 3 or is not controlled by your medication
- Numbness that has not worn off by the next day
- Rash, hives, itching, or severe diarrhea while taking a prescribed medication

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for:

- Difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Swelling spreading to the eye, under the jaw, or down the neck
- Heavy bleeding that soaks through gauze and will not stop
- Chest pain, fainting, or signs of a severe allergic reaction (face or throat swelling)

Your surgery was performed by OnSite Surgical Partners at your dental office. For any questions about your healing or your care, contact that office.