



DENTAL IMPLANT AFTERCARE

After placement of dental implants

Unnecessary pain and the complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if the following instructions are followed carefully. There may be a metal healing abutment protruding through the gingival (gum) tissue at the implant site. It should be cleaned just like a tooth. You must be careful not to chew on the implant during the entire healing phase until the tooth is placed on the implant.

Immediately following surgery:

- Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery. This may initiate bleeding causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- To minimize any swelling, place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section swelling for explanation.
- Take pain medication (Ibuprofen or Paracetamol) as soon as you can so it is digested before the local anaesthetic has worn off. Having something of substance in the stomach to coat the stomach will help minimize nausea from the pain medications. Refer to the section on pain for specific details.
- Restrict your activities during the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable. If you are active, your heart will be beating harder and you can expect excessive bleeding and throbbing from the wound.
- NO SMOKING UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Bleeding:

- A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. On the skin where the surface is dry, bleeding clots in 10 minutes. In the mouth where things are wet, it takes 6-8 hours for the clot to gel up and the bleeding to subside. Slight bleeding or oozing causing redness in the saliva is very common.
- Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first gently rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for up to 20 minutes. Repeat as necessary.
- To minimize further bleeding, sit upright, and maintain constant pressure on the gauze (no talking or chewing) and avoiding exercise.
- If bleeding does not subside after 6-8 hours call the surgery for further instructions (01283 791 357).



Swelling:

- The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. There is usually a fair amount of the cheek retraction involved with the removal of impacted wisdom teeth. Therefore, you should expect swelling of the cheek after your surgery.
- The swelling will not become apparent until the following day and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively.
- The swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Sealed plastic bags filled with ice, ice packs or a frozen bag of peas wrapped in a wash cloth should be applied to the side of the face where surgery was performed.
- The ice packs should be applied within 20 minutes on/20 minutes off for the afternoon and evening immediately following your extraction. After 24 hours ice has no beneficial effect.
- Thirty-six hours (36) following surgery the application of moist heat to the side of the face may help some in reducing the size any swelling that has formed.
- Soft, puffy swelling that you can indent with your finger after oral surgery is very normal.
- Bright red, rock hard, hot swelling that does not indent with finger pressure which is getting bigger by the hour would suggest infection. This usually would develop around 3-4 days after surgery, when you would expect swelling to be going down, not up. If this should occur, please call our surgery (01283 791 357).

Pain:

- Pain or discomfort following surgery is expected to last 4-5 days. For many patients, it seems the third and fourth day may require more pain medicine than the first and second day. Following the fourth day pain should subside more and more each day.
- Many medications for pain can cause nausea or vomiting. It is wise to have something of substance in the stomach (yogurt, ice cream, pudding etc) before taking prescription medicine/ over the counter medicines (aspirin/ibuprofen). Even coating the stomach with pepto bismol or milk of magnesia can help prevent or moderate nausea.
- For moderate pain Ibuprofen or Paracetamol may be taken.
- **DO NOT DRIVE AN AUTOMOBILE OR WORK AROUND OR OPERATE HEAVY MACHINERY IF YOU ARE TAKING PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICINE.**

Antibiotics:

- If you have been placed on antibiotics take the tablets as directed. You should take them on schedule.
- Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavourable reaction. You should call the surgery (01283 791 357) to report any such finding or if you have any questions.



Diet:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Drink from a glass or cup and don't use a straw. The sucking motion can disturb the healing blood clot, and start bleeding again.
- Avoid hot liquids or food while you are numb.
- Soft foods and liquids can be eaten on the day of surgery. The act of chewing doesn't damage anything, but you should avoid chewing sharp or hard objects at the surgical site for several days
- Return to a normal diet as soon as possible unless otherwise directed. You will find eating multiple small meals is easier than three regular meals for the first few days

Oral Hygiene:

- Good oral hygiene is essential to proper healing of any oral surgery site.
- You can brush your teeth as normal. Do not avoid the implant site/s, but be very gentle. Vigorous rinsing should be avoided until the next day following surgery.
- The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 5-6 times a day especially after eating. Salt water (cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt) is ideal but plain water is also ok.
- The day after surgery, you can use chlorhexidine mouthwash three times daily, after breakfast, lunch and before bed. Be sure to rinse for at least 30 seconds then spit out.

Smoking:

- Smoking slows down healing dramatically. Nicotine constricts blood vessels which slows healing of surgical sites and affects the long term health of the gum and bone.
- Smoking and dental implants do not mix. There is a documented increased failure rate of implants in patients who smoke.
- If you choose to smoke you do so at the risk of losing your dental implants due to poor healing and increased gum disease in smokers.

Activity:

- You should keep physical activities to a minimum for 6-12 hours following surgery.
- If you are considering exercise, throbbing or bleeding may occur. If this occurs you should discontinue exercising.
- Keep in mind that you are probably not taking normal nourishment. This may weaken you and further limit your ability to exercise.