



Post-Operative Instructions
Dental Implants and/or Bone Grafting

Immediately Following Surgery:

- If your procedure involved sinus surgery, avoid hard sneezing or blowing your nose if possible.
- You may see or feel a metal post protruding from the gum tissue at the surgical site. This is normal.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when your doctor gives the okay.
- DO NOT wear any prosthesis unless instructed to do so by the doctor. (ie: night guard, flippers, etc.)

Bleeding

Some bleeding or redness in the saliva is normal for 24 hours. Active bleeding is very uncommon and can usually be controlled by biting on a gauze pad placed directly on the bleeding site for 10-15 minutes. **Only apply biting pressure if you are instructed that it is acceptable to do so.** If you had sinus surgery or grafting a small amount of intermittent bleeding may occur from the nose for 7-10 days following surgery. This is normal and will diminish with time. If heavy or persistent bleeding occurs, please call for further instructions.

Swelling

Normally expected swelling is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes, and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-op. Swelling may be minimized by the use of ice packs immediately following surgery. Two baggies filled with ice, a bag of frozen corn or peas, or commercially available ice packs should be applied to the sides of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be applied 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off while you are awake. After 24-36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect. Thirty-six hours following surgery the application of heat to the sides of the face is beneficial in reducing jaw stiffness and residual swelling. After reaching peak 2-3 days after surgery, facial swelling should begin to decrease.

Pain

For the first 24 hours following your surgery, take your prescription pain medication as prescribed. You may begin taking your prescription pain medication 1-2 hours following surgery, **after** you have had something to eat and **prior** to the "numbness" of the local anesthetic wearing off. If additional pain relief is needed, you may supplement your prescription by taking 400-600mg of ibuprofen* (Advil, Motrin) every 4 hours. The additive effect will work best if you stagger your prescription medication with the ibuprofen, such that you are taking one or the other (not both) every 2 hours. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. **Do not** drive or operate heavy machinery and avoid alcoholic beverages while on prescription medication. Pain or discomfort following surgery should peak 2-3 days post-surgery and subside on a daily basis after the third day.

Diet

Do not use straws. Drink from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. Start with liquids, such as milk shakes, instant breakfast, fruit juice, and Ensure. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Your food intake will be limited for the first few days; however, you may eat whatever you can comfortably tolerate as long as you chew on the opposing side and only eat what you can cut with a plastic fork. You should compensate for this and prevent dehydration by increasing your fluid intake. At least 4-5 glasses of liquid should be consumed daily. Do not consume any alcoholic beverages or carbonated drinks for the first 48 hours. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort, and heal faster if you continue to eat.

Oral Hygiene

Good oral hygiene is essential to good healing. The night of surgery, use the prescribed a mouth rinse before bedtime. Starting the day after surgery, the mouth rinse should be used twice daily, after breakfast and before bed. Rinse with one-half ounce undiluted for at least 30 seconds. Do not swallow. Continue using the mouth rinse until the bottle is finished. Warm salt water rinses (one-half teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) may be used 4-5 times a day, as well, especially after meals. Gentle brushing of your teeth and the healing abutments is important. When brushing upper surgical sites, use gentle downward strokes. When brushing lower surgical sites use gentle upward strokes. This may cause minor bleeding which is normal.

Sutures

Absorbable sutures are placed in the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to aid healing. Sometimes they become dislodged. This is no cause for alarm. If the sutures are completely loose, just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. Do NOT pull on sutures that are still intact. In non-absorbable sutures were used, they will be removed approximately one week after surgery. The removal of sutures takes only a minute or so, and there is no discomfort associated with this procedure.

Activity

Keep physical activities to a minimum immediately following surgery. Do not bend over or pick up heavy objects for the first 24 hours. Do not exercise until released to do so by the doctor. 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, cause increased fatigue, and further limit your ability to exercise.

Bruising and Discoloration

Significant black, blue, yellow and/or greenish bruising **frequently** occurs following bone grafting procedures and sometimes occurs following implant placement. Unfortunately, this is normal as blood pigments seep through the facial tissues. It is not painful and will resolve in 7-10 days. You may accelerate the resolution of bruising by applying heat to the affected areas using a heating pad on a low setting.

Antibiotics

If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics are sometimes given to help prevent infection. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. If you discontinue taking antibiotics and are taking a steroid, you must also stop the steroid. Please inform the doctor if the need arises to stop taking any medication. Call the office if you have any questions.

Nausea and Vomiting

Although uncommon, nausea is an occasional side effect of intravenous anesthetics or prescription medication, even when taking prescribed anti-nausea medication. Nausea may also be caused by swallowing a small amount of blood. Although unpleasant, it is usually transient and is not harmful. In the event of nausea and/or vomiting, stop taking all oral medication, lie down, apply a cool compress to your head, and remain inactive. Wait at least one hour before you resume eating. Begin with clear liquids (broth, apple juice) and dry carbohydrates (toast, crackers). Avoid carbonated beverages for the first 48 hours after surgery. Also avoid caffeine and dairy products until the nausea subsides. If nausea persists, please call for assistance. It may be necessary to change your prescription medication.

Jaw Stiffness

Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event that will resolve in time. Taking 400-600mg of ibuprofen* every 4 hours and apply heat to the jaw muscles using an electric heating pad on a low setting to help resolve stiffness.

***Do not** take ibuprofen or similar compounds if allergic to aspirin.

Wearing your Prosthesis

Dentures, flippers, or partials should not be used immediately after surgery unless directed to do so by your doctor.

Special Concerns & Considerations:

- Move slowly when going from a reclining position to sitting or standing. Reduces nutritional intake, prescriptions pain medication, and intravenous anesthetics can cause dizziness, lightheadedness, and loss of balance. After lying down, always sit for one minute before standing. If, upon standing, you begin to feel lightheaded or dizzy, lay back down, wait five minutes, and then try again.
- After bone grafting it is normal to occasionally detect small amounts of a gritty substance in the saliva. This is a harmless supplemental graft material with the consistency of fine sand or sugar granules.
- If the corners of the mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as Vaseline.
- There may be a slight elevation of body temperature for 24-48 hours. This is normal and is usually due to slight dehydration. Increasing your fluid intake should resolve this problem. If an elevated temperature persists for more than 48 hours, please notify the office.