

GuidedSMILE™

Post-Operative Patient Instructions

BLEEDING

After your implant surgery, it is normal to experience bleeding for the first 48 to 72 hours. However, the bleeding should never be severe. To control and minimize the bleeding, follow these steps:

- Reposition fresh gauze packs over the surgical area, allowing you to apply firm pressure.
- Maintain pressure for at least 30 minutes at a time.
- If bleeding persists, you can use a tea bag as an alternative to gauze. Wet the tea bag with hot water, squeeze it until it is damp-dry, and wrap it in a moist gauze. Apply pressure over the surgical site for 30 minutes.

When bleeding is under control, the gauze may appear light pink, spotted, or rust colored. Once the bleeding has subsided, you can safely remove the gauze. If the bleeding remains uncontrolled despite these efforts, please contact our office for further guidance.

To prevent the dislodging or disturbing of clots avoid:

- Carbonated, hot or steamy drinks. Cold and/or warm drinks are acceptable.
- Sucking through straws or rinsing /spitting vigorously.
- Smoking and drinking alcohol.
- Increased physical activity for the first 72 hrs, e.g. heavy lifting and exercising.

BRUSHING

During the first week after surgery, you should avoid brushing directly around the surgical site to minimize irritation and protect the healing tissue.

During this initial seven-day period, do not attempt to floss. Instead use a small, warm, damp washcloth to gently wipe down the prosthesis. This will help remove any debris or plaque buildup without applying too much pressure to the surgical site.

After the first 72 hours, you may begin using a water flosser to gently irrigate the area. When using a water flosser, ensure that the pressure setting is no higher than four to avoid causing damage to the healing

tissue. Additionally, you can rinse your mouth with warm salt water to help soothe the area and promote healing.

Continue to brush and floss your opposing dentition as usual to prevent the buildup of plaque and bacteria.

EATING

As a rule, if a plastic fork cannot easily pass through a food, then avoid it. Consult your dental professional for personalized advice on your post-surgery diet.

For the first two months after implant surgery, consume soft, cool foods that require minimal chewing to protect the surgical site and ensure implant success. This will help protect the surgical site and ensure the success of your implant. Recommended foods include yogurt, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, soft eggs, ice cream, boneless fish, and tender meats.

Avoid hard, hot, or crunchy foods that may negatively impact healing and lead to implant failure. Excessive force on the implant can overload the surrounding bone, compromising the stability and long-term success of the implant.

BRUISING

After your surgery, you may notice bruising in the areas around the surgical site, including your cheeks, chin, lip, and jaw line. This is a common and temporary side effect of the procedure. The discoloration you see is a normal part of the healing process and should not be a cause for concern. In most cases, the bruising will gradually fade away on its own within two weeks following your surgery.

SWELLING

After your surgical procedure, it is normal to experience some minor swelling (edema) in the treated area. To help reduce swelling and promote comfort, follow these guidelines:

- Apply ice packs to the affected area as needed during the first 48 hours following surgery. This will help minimize swelling and alleviate discomfort.
- Avoid sleeping on the side of your face where the surgery was performed. Sleeping on the opposite side or on your back will help prevent pressure-induced swelling (pressure edema). Another alternative is to sleep in an elevated position.
- Monitor the extent of the swelling closely. Swelling should be limited to the immediate surgical site and should not spread to other areas of your face or neck.

If you notice that the swelling extends beyond the surgical site and spreads to your neck, nose, cheeks, ears, or eyes, seek immediate medical attention by calling 911 or going to the nearest emergency room. This type of extensive swelling may indicate a more serious complication that requires prompt treatment.

SMOKING

Smoking should be strictly avoided after any surgery, as it significantly reduces blood flow, which is crucial for proper healing and the prevention of complications like dry socket. There is no remedy to reverse the negative effects of smoking on an open wound.

Patients who choose to smoke following their procedure will void any guarantee of success, and any necessary re-treatment or post-operative management will be billed directly to the patient. To ensure the best possible outcome and a smooth recovery, refrain from smoking after your surgery.

SUTURES

Your surgical procedure will require sutures (stitches) to secure graft materials in place or to close the tissues at the surgical site. The type of suture used (resorbable or non-resorbable) and the duration for which it remains in your mouth will be determined by your provider based on the specific nature of your surgery. It is essential to follow your provider's instructions regarding suture care and to attend all scheduled follow-up appointments for suture removal, if necessary.

If you notice that a suture has prematurely loosened or come undone, contact your provider for further guidance. Do not attempt to remove or manipulate the suture yourself, as this may lead to complications and compromise the healing process.

To ensure the best possible outcome, avoid pulling, playing with, or manipulating the edges of the sutures with your tongue or fingers. Doing so may cause the sutures to fail prematurely, leading to potential complications and delaying the healing process.

SINUSES

When certain teeth in the upper jaw are removed, particularly those with roots extending into the maxillary sinuses, there is a risk of exposing or perforating the Schneiderian membrane, which lines the sinus cavity. This occurrence is a direct result of the proximity of the tooth roots to the sinus membrane and is not considered an accident or negligence on the part of the provider.

The treatment required to address an exposure or perforation of the sinus membrane will depend on the size and severity of the opening. Your provider will assess the situation and recommend the most appropriate course of action to prevent the development of an oroantral communication, which is an abnormal connection between the oral cavity and the sinus cavity.

To promote proper healing and minimize the risk of further damage patients must:

- Avoid lifting objects weighing more than twenty pounds.
- Refrain from blowing your nose, as this can create pressure and disrupt the healing process.
- Try to avoid excessive coughing, as this can also put pressure on the sinus membrane.

Your provider will give you specific instructions regarding the use of appropriate medications, which may include:

- Antibiotics to prevent infection.
- Analgesics to manage pain and discomfort.
- Antihistamines and decongestants to reduce inflammation and congestion in the sinuses.

INFECTION

After undergoing any surgical procedure there is a risk of developing an infection. It is essential to be aware of the signs and symptoms of infection so that prompt treatment can be initiated if necessary. The following are several indications that an infection may be present:

- **Fever:** A persistent elevated body temperature may suggest that your body is fighting an infection.
- **Foul smell:** An unpleasant odor emanating from the surgical site could indicate the presence of bacteria.
- **Swelling:** Unusual or excessive swelling around the surgical area may be a sign of infection.
- **Discoloration:** Redness or darkening of the skin surrounding the surgical site could indicate an infectious process.
- **Pus:** The presence of pus or discharge from the surgical wound is a clear sign of infection.

In addition to these general signs, if you have a fixed prosthesis attached directly to dental implants, any movement or loosening of the prosthesis may indicate a failure of the implants, which could be caused by an infection. If you experience any of these symptoms then early intervention is key to prevent the spread of infection:

- **During regular business hours:** Contact the office immediately to schedule an appointment with your provider.
- **Outside of regular business hours:** Seek evaluation and treatment at your local urgent care center or healthcare facility.

PAIN

After dental surgery, most patients can manage their pain effectively without the need for narcotic medications. To manage your pain, be sure to follow the instructions given by your doctor. Your doctor will discuss your medical history and recommend the most appropriate medication dosages for you following your surgery.

In addition to pain management, it is common to experience other discomforts such as sore throat and pain when swallowing. This is often due to swelling of the muscles in the tongue and throat, which can occur after dental procedures. These symptoms typically subside within two to three days.

STIFFNESS

You may experience stiffness in your jaw muscles, which can cause difficulty opening your mouth (trismus). This is a common occurrence and typically lasts for a few days following your surgery.

It is important to remember not to force your mouth open during this time, as doing so may cause further discomfort and potentially delay your recovery. Instead, there are two simple methods you can use to help alleviate the stiffness and promote relaxation of the jaw muscles:

- **Massage:** Gently massage the affected jaw muscles using your fingertips. Apply light pressure and make circular motions over the area. This can help improve blood flow, reduce tension, and promote relaxation of the muscles.
- **Moist heat:** After the first 24 hours following your surgery, you can apply moist heat to the affected area. Wet a clean towel with warm water, wring out the excess, and place it on your jaw for 15-20 minutes at a time. The warmth will help increase circulation, relax the muscles, and ease the stiffness.

Repeat these techniques as needed throughout the day to manage your symptoms. As the days pass, you should notice a gradual improvement in your ability to open your mouth comfortably.

If the stiffness persists for more than a few days or if you experience severe pain or difficulty opening your mouth, contact your dental provider for further evaluation and guidance. They may recommend additional strategies or medications to help manage your symptoms and ensure a smooth recovery.



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