

Instructions for Home Care Following an Implant

- Before your surgery, you were given an anesthetic to ensure your comfort. This will leave your lips, teeth and tongue feeling numb after the surgery is completed. For this reason, please avoid chewing until the numbness has worn off completely
- We will likely prescribe antibiotics for you. Please begin taking these, as directed, the day before surgery, and continue to take them for the indicated length of time.
- We also usually recommend an antibiotic oral rinse for you to use before and after surgery. Again, please follow directions carefully.
- If you are having IV sedation or general anesthesia for your surgery, do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight the day prior to surgery.
- On the day of surgery, use your mouth rinse, then take your antibiotic with just a small sip of water.
- Following surgery, you will be asked to bite firmly but gently on a gauze pad to stop the bleeding. We'll give you a package of gauze to take home with you and place over the surgical site. Change the pad as necessary, and use them until the bleeding stops completely. You can also bite gently on a moist tea bag for 20 minutes. Be sure to call us if bleeding persists or increases.
- It's normal to experience some discomfort after implant surgery. We can give you a pain reliever prescription; be sure to follow the directions on the label.
- You can also decrease discomfort and swelling by applying an ice pack - 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off - for the first six hours following surgery. You can continue applying an ice pack for as long as 72 hours following surgery. After 72 hours, apply moist heat to the area.
- Keep your head elevated for the first 24-48 hours after you get home to minimize swelling and bleeding.
- Relax as much as possible and avoid all strenuous activities for at least two days following your surgery.
- Drink at least eight glasses of water or fruit juice each day, and be sure to eat, as nourishment is vital to the healing process. limit your diet to soft foods like yogurt, soft soups, pudding and soft-cooked eggs for the first week.
- Rinse your mouth with a warm salt water solution (dissolve one teaspoon of salt water in one cup of warm water) three to four times a day for the week following your surgery. Be sure to spit carefully.
- If you wear a denture or partial denture which would cover the implant area, be sure to leave it out for a minimum of one week after surgery. A soft reline can be created for your denture once the area has healed adequately; this will allow you to wear your denture comfortably.
- As your jaw bone grows around the titanium posts, you may experience some soreness which can last for several weeks. An over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, will usually relieve this soreness.

Dry Socket

Dry socket is an infection in your tooth socket after a tooth is extracted. The condition usually develops when a blood clot fails to form in the socket, or if the blood clot comes loose. Dry socket occurs in approximately five percent of all tooth extractions.

Normally, the blood clot that forms after a tooth is removed promotes healing, laying the foundation for

the growth of new bone tissue. When dry socket occurs, this blood clot is lost and the infected, inflamed socket appears empty - hence the name. Nerves are exposed, and sometimes the bone is visible in the empty socket.

You may not have symptoms until three to five days after the extraction. Then, the condition will manifest itself as severe pain that doesn't subside, often accompanied by what feels like an earache. You may also have an unpleasant taste in your mouth, and bad breath.

Causes & prevention

Several things can cause the premature loss of a blood clot from an extraction site, including smoking, forceful spitting, sucking through a straw, coughing or sneezing. You should also avoid consuming carbonated or alcoholic beverages after an extraction, as these have also been associated with the development of dry socket. Also, you should:

- Keep your fingers and tongue away from the extraction site.
- Apply an ice pack to your jaw for the first 24 hours following surgery - on for 15-20 minutes, and off for 30-40 minutes - to prevent pain and swelling and stop excessive bleeding.
- Do not rinse your mouth the day of surgery. The next day, you can rinse gently with warm salt water; dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water. Be sure to rinse and spit gently.

Call our office right away if you notice any symptoms of dry socket. Treatment for dry socket typically includes a gentle rinsing of the socket. We then pack it with topical anesthetic and a sterile gauze dressing. You'll usually need to return to our office two to three times over a two-week time period, so we can change the dressing.

The Importance of a Temporary Crown or Bridge

We will place a temporary crown or bridge to protect your teeth and gum tissues while a custom restoration is being created for you in a dental laboratory. In addition, this temporary will help prevent the adjacent teeth from shifting, ensuring that your final custom-crafted crown or bridge will fit.

Temporary cement will be used to hold the restoration in place. Although the temporary should be very comfortable, you may need to alter your eating and oral hygiene habits slightly to ensure the temporary stays in place between appointments.

- Avoid chewing gum and eating sticky or hard foods.
- If possible, chew only on the opposite side of your mouth.
- Brush and floss carefully each day, pulling the floss out from the side as you floss next to the temporary. Pulling out from the top can cause the temporary to come loose. If you have problems flossing, let us know. We have a product called Superfloss - thicker, sturdier floss that may give you better control.

It's vital to the proper fit of your final restoration that your temporary stays in place. If your temporary does come off, do not try to replace it yourself. Call us immediately so we can arrange to cement it back into place. You should also call our office right away if:

- Your bite feels uneven
- You have persistent pain
- You have any questions or concerns

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