

After Dental Implant Surgery

Following dental implant surgery, patients must take detailed care of the area surrounding their new implant. For the first month the dental implant is still integrating with the bone and tissues so the patient's care routine will be slightly more involved during this initial period. Above all, do not disturb the wound in the initial days that follow surgery. Avoid rinsing, spitting, and touching the mouth for 24 hours after surgery to avoid contaminating or irritating the surgical site. After dental implant surgery it's important to follow these care instructions:

Antibiotics – Patients should take all prescribed antibiotics to prevent infection at the surgical site. Twenty-four hours after the surgery, patients should begin using the prescribed oral rinse twice daily alongside a warm saltwater rinse 4-5 times daily (preferably after every meal/snack).

Bleeding – Blood in the patients' saliva is normal during the first 24 hours following surgery. We suggest biting on gauze pads to help control and lessen blood flow. Gently bite down on the gauze pad and try to maintain constant pressure, repeating as often as needed, or until bleeding lessens.

Dealing with pain – Shortly after your dental implant surgery the anesthetic will wear off. You should begin taking pain medication before this happens. Any over-the-counter pain medication can be taken (e.g., Tylenol®, Aleve®, ibuprofen, etc.).

Diet – We recommend an initial diet of soft foods, but patients can resume a normal diet as soon as they feel capable of doing so. Stay hydrated. It is critical that you are drinking plenty of fluids.

Hygiene – In order for the dental implants to heal properly, the surgical site must be kept clean. Continue to brush your teeth as you normally would but avoid any sutures and do not brush the implant. The antibiotic and saltwater rinses will disinfect the implant itself.

Swelling – After dental implant surgery some amount of swelling is to be expected. To help minimize swelling, try to keep your head elevated and lower your activity level as much as possible. Use ice packs for the first 48 hours and apply continuously, or as frequently as possible to minimize facial swelling.

Wearing your prosthesis or night guard – Partial dentures, flippers, full dentures, retainers, or night guards should not be used for at least 10 days following surgery. If there are any special circumstances, our practice will discuss those with you during your pre-operative consultation.

Smoking – Smoking after dental implant surgery has an increased risk of infection which also increases the risk of dental implants failing to integrate. We recommend that patients do not smoke for a minimum of 2 weeks after dental implant surgery.

What does recovery involve? While each patient's case is different, recovery after dental implant surgery happens in a series of phases. With your new dental implants, maintaining proper oral hygiene should be your primary focus. In order for the implant to properly fuse with the jawbone, it must remain clean. Also keep in mind that when properly cared for, a dental implant can serve its owner for life.

When maintaining proper hygiene, oral discomfort should gradually lessen. Swelling, bruising, and minor bleeding may still occur. If any pain does continue, feel free to continue using the pain medications.

Healing time differs depending on whether a patient receives immediate crown placement or waits for the implant to fuse with the jawbone. Your recovery time frame will depend on your individual case and treatment plan; follow-up appointments will be scheduled accordingly.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office.