

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR IMPLANT PATIENTS**

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You survived a very important part of the journey toward replacing your missing natural tooth or teeth in a manner that comes as close as possible to matching the esthetics and function of your original equipment. During this Stage I surgery, one or more pure titanium implant(s) were carefully installed in the jawbone under your gum. You will probably be able to see the small healing abutment(s) screwed onto the top of your implant(s) that are flush with the gumline. **Quiet rest these next several hours will facilitate early, comfortable and complete healing. This is a time to be good to yourself and to be pampered. You deserve it!**

### **COMFORT**

You can expect to have some discomfort when the anesthetic wears off. We suggest that you take a pain pill before the anesthetic wears off so that the transition will be smooth. If you begin to feel the first signs of pain, take another pain pill as long as you are within the guidelines on the bottle or that we discussed. If your pain medication contains codeine, wash it down with a dairy product to soothe your stomach.

For minor discomfort, take an aspirin substitute such as Tylenol (acetaminophen). Aspirin and Advil (ibuprofen) tend to encourage bleeding, so take them carefully the first day or two if you must.

It is normal to experience a slight feeling of weakness or chills during the first day or two after surgery. This is part of your body's defense mechanism and is not cause for alarm.

### **DRESSING (Gauze)**

We have placed a roll of moist gauze over the surgical site and ask that you bite on it with firm but gentle pressure for at least two hours after you leave. The purpose of this is to encourage a thin blood clot to form under the gum where the implants were placed and it is important to the eventual outcome of the procedure.

## **BLEEDING**

Some oozing of blood from the surgical site is normal during the first twenty-four hours, so do not be alarmed if you notice pink streaks in your saliva. If the flow increases and your mouth is filling up with red blood, try to locate the area that it is coming from. Sit quietly, make a new roll of gauze and place it gently over the surgical wound. Bite firmly but gently for at least two hours and don't hesitate to call us at home or office. It is also helpful to sleep with your head elevated by a couple of pillows that first night or two after surgery.

## **SWELLING**

You may experience some swelling of the face or jaw around the surgical area. It may start during the first day or two, last a few days then begin to subside. This is a normal defense mechanism and is no cause for alarm. **To help minimize swelling, place an ice bag on your face outside the surgical area during the first twenty-four hours after the procedure. Leave it on for fifteen minutes, off for fifteen minutes then back on, etc.** After the swelling has reached its peak in a day or two, warm compresses can be applied to speed recovery.

Some patients tend to bruise on the cheek or neck adjacent to the surgical area. This is normal and should not alarm you. If swelling or bruising persist and concern you or if you feel you have an infection and fever, do not hesitate to give us a call.

## **ANTIBIOTICS**

If you were prescribed an antibiotic, take it conscientiously as directed until all pills are gone. By stopping in the middle, you can actually do more harm than good.

## **ORAL HYGIENE**

If you still have some of your own natural teeth, don't be concerned with brushing or flossing during the day of surgery. After that, it is fine to resume your normal routine. Be gentle but thorough and be careful of the implant wound where it approaches your natural teeth.

After the first twenty-four hours, it is **important** for all patients to begin gently rinsing warm salt water several times a day, especially after meals. Mix ½ teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water. You might eventually be given a prescription for an antimicrobial mouthwash to use as healing progresses.

This is a good time to mention the importance of keeping your mouth movements very subdued and minimal. Exaggerated or prolonged use of your mouth and facial muscles applies tension to the wound, inhibits rapid healing and might increase your discomfort.

### **DENTURES**

If you wear a full or partial denture where the implants are placed, your denture **may** be seated immediately after surgery. You may be advised to leave the denture in overnight because if you swell, you might not be able to get it in the next morning. You should see your dentist one week after surgery to have your denture refitted and relined with a soft liner. After healing, wearing your denture too much can jeopardize a successful result by placing pressure on the implant(s). If there are times when you do not **have** to wear your denture, it is best not to do so.

### **DIET**

**The importance of a nutritious diet cannot be overemphasized**, especially during this initial healing period when your body is stressed. If you will consume good liquid or soft foods, you will feel better, remain more comfortable and heal faster.

A liquid or blender diet is best for the first meal or two after surgery. Besides soups, milkshakes, sport shakes, Instant Breakfast and blender concoctions, your drug store will have liquid dietary supplements like Ensure, Metracal and Boost. **Avoid hot liquids the first twelve hours after surgery but cold liquids are encouraged.** Smoking and alcoholic beverages are discouraged because of their effect on healing

Soft foods can be added the day after your surgery, or whenever you feel comfortable chewing. Here are some suggestions: eggs (scrambled, quiche, custard, etc.) cooked cereals, pancakes, pasta, noodle casseroles, baked fish, chicken and dumplings, soft breads and ice cream. Vitamin C aids healing so orange juice and tomato juice are excellent. You should also continue with your normal vitamin supplements. Don't let these suggestions limit your own imagination regarding appropriate ways to nourish yourself during these first several days!

### **POST-OPERATIVE VISITS**

At about one week after your surgery we will see you to remove the sutures, cleanse the wound and monitor your healing. At that point we can usually make a determination as to when you should see your dentist to refit and reline your removable denture or partial denture if you have one.

In some cases it might be necessary to see you again about two weeks after surgery to monitor the healing of your wound, cleanse any debris from the site and, if appropriate, to make sure the relined denture or partial is fitting properly. All of your post-operative visits are relatively short and you should expect little (if any) discomfort.

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