

## Gary N. Pointer, D.D.S., PLLC

**After Dental Implant Surgery:** Dental Implants are used in a wide variety of applications in Restorative/Reconstructive Dentistry. For this reason, it is difficult to give precise written instructions applicable to your unique treatment. Fortunately, many recommendations are standard and can be shared with you via general guidelines, which are found on the “Post-Operative Instructions for Oral Surgery” sheet. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. If there are any questions, please call the office.

While Dental Implant Surgery is very technically sophisticated, the post-operative burden tends to be less than what many patients expect. Unlike dental extractions, implant surgery does not leave temporary voids in the bone or large open wounds (like those after some dental extractions).

**Day of Surgery:** You have had one or more dental implants placed or uncovered today. They have been placed with or without grafting to optimize success. Several possibilities exist:

Implant(s) was placed and the gum tissue was closed over the implant(s) with no temporary restoration. This is the easiest situation to deal with after treatment since there is no open wound to care for. You have dissolvable sutures in the surgery area. In this case you merely have to follow the “Post-Operative Instructions for Oral Surgery” sheet.

Implant(s) was placed or uncovered today and an extension (abutment) was placed on the implant(s) that you can see when you look at the surgical site. In this case you merely have to follow the “Post-Operative Instructions for Oral Surgery” sheet, as well as the following as they apply to your situation:

If you had a removable temporary replacement (flipper or removable partial or complete denture) placed at the time of surgery, please refer to the "Post-Operative Instructions for Oral Appliances or Crowns Placed at the Time of Surgery" sheet.

If you had a temporary restoration placed at the time of surgery that is not removable by you, please be careful with this restoration in the same way that you would with a temporary crown. Try not to disturb the restoration by eating crispy, hard or sticky foods.

**Post-Operative Healing Expectations:** Regarding discomfort immediately following surgery, the good news is that implant therapy is generally much less painful than patients expect. Some discomfort can obviously be anticipated, but it should be very manageable with over the counter pain medications.

After about 4-7 days, the symptoms related to your surgery should be minimal. There may still be a minor amount of gum tissue sensitivity, but even that should be getting better. The best indication that an implant is healthy and healing normally is that it is ultimately symptom free. For this reason, if you experience any symptoms in the area of the implant after the initial post-operative period, please call our office.

If bleeding continues, create firm direct pressure by biting on a moistened tea bag placed over the surgical site for 30-60 minutes. Tea has tannic acid which is an astringent. Direct pressure and the tannic acid will constrict blood vessels and help to stop the bleeding. If active bleeding persists, please call our office for further instructions.

**Swelling:** Swelling is a normal occurrence after surgery. Immediate application of ice to the face near the area of surgery will help to minimize swelling and bruising. Use an ice bag or sealed plastic bag filled with ice as much as possible during the first 12-24 hours after surgery while awake. Ice is helpful only during the first 72 hours after surgery.

**Diet:** Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid hot liquids and hot food on the day of surgery. Liquids and soft food should be consumed on the day of surgery. Return to a normal diet as soon as possible unless otherwise directed.

Please avoid chewing on the area where the implants were placed. Creating pressure or chewing on the implant sites during the three to six-month healing period can interfere with implant integration, compromising the outcome or resulting in implant failure.

**Pain:** You should begin taking pain medication before the local anesthetic wearing off. For mild to moderate pain, 1 or 2 Tylenol 325 mg tablets may be taken every 4 hours. Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) may be taken instead of Tylenol.

Ibuprofen, bought over the counter comes in 200 mg tablets and may be taken in the following doses: two 200mg tablets may be taken every 4 hours, three 200mg tablets may be taken every 6 hours, or four 200mg tablets may be taken every 8 hours, as needed for pain.

Do not take any of the above medication if you are allergic or have been instructed by your doctor not to take it.

**Oral Hygiene:** Good oral hygiene is essential for good healing. The night of surgery use the prescribed Peridex (chlorhexidine) Oral Rinse before bed if there is no active bleeding.

The day after surgery Peridex should be used twice daily after breakfast and before going to bed at night; rinse for at least 60 seconds then spit out.

Please see the label on the bottle for full instructions. Warm salt water rinses (1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water) should be used at least 4-5 times a day, especially after meals. Keeping your mouth clean by brushing and flossing your teeth is important.

Start brushing your teeth on the evening of surgery or the first day after surgery. Be very gentle with brushing near the surgical areas. If there is a healing abutment or temporary crown on the implant it must be kept clean.

Once the tissues are sufficiently healed (usually in 10-14 days), the metal healing abutment or crown should be brushed with a soft bristle tooth brush and tooth paste gently but thoroughly two to three times a day just like a tooth. Until that time, it must be kept clean with the Peridex rinse.

**Activity:** It is generally best to avoid exercise or strenuous exertion until pain and swelling resolves. If you experience throbbing or aching at the surgical sites while exercising you should discontinue exercising, wait a day or two, then try again. Keep in mind that you are probably not taking normal nourishment; this may weaken you and further limit your ability to exercise.

It is best to walk, move about and/or sit in a chair. Short naps in bed during the day are acceptable. Lying in bed for a prolonged period of time during the day is not healthy. It will only slow recovery and enhance fatigue. You will feel stronger and better faster if you get your body moving.

Smoking significantly increases the risk for implant failure. Discontinue smoking for at least the first two weeks after surgery. This may be a good time to consider speaking to your physician about stopping smoking all together.

Excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages can also interfere with implant healing. Please avoid drinking alcoholic beverages for the first week after surgery.

**Antibiotics:** Be sure to take the prescribed antibiotics as directed to help prevent infection.

**Wearing Your Prosthesis:** We understand how important it is for our patients to be able to wear their temporary teeth as soon as possible after surgery. All removable appliances including partial dentures, flippers and full dentures must be checked for proper fit before they are worn.

These appliances can transmit pressure to the implant site which can interfere with implant healing and result in implant failure. In some cases, it may be necessary to go without wearing the temporary teeth for a few days until swelling resolves and some healing takes place. In some cases, partial dentures, flippers, or full dentures should be used only for cosmetic purposes, not for chewing. They should be worn only in public when required and removed in the privacy of your own home

If you should have any questions please call the office. 817.737.2531