



POST SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions are designed to advise you of procedures that will aid in promoting comfortable healing and inform you of situations that may possibly require special attention.

DISCOMFORT

It is not unusual to have a certain amount of discomfort for a few days following your surgery. In many instances two Tylenol or Advil tablets taken every four to six hours will be sufficient to relieve discomfort. Do not take aspirin as it prolongs bleeding. You will be given a prescription for a more potent medication to enhance the post-surgical recovery period. The first dose should be taken as soon as possible after the surgery, then using this medication every four to six hours as needed to control discomfort. The medication may be taken with food to prevent nausea.

SWELLING

Minor swelling or bruising of the skin in the surgical area may follow your surgical procedure. To minimize this it is advisable to place an ice pack over the area, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for the first 24 hours. Start the ice pack application as soon as possible following surgery. Also hold cold water with ice chips in your mouth when the ice pack is not in place for the remainder of the day. Try not to rinse on the day of surgery because this may disturb the blood clot. The swelling or bruising may continue for 2 or 3 days after surgery and then subside. If after the second day swelling continues, heat may be applied to the involved area in the form of wet or dry compresses as often as is convenient.

BLEEDING

You can anticipate some seepage or slight bleeding for the first day. A small amount of bleeding is all that is necessary to discolor your saliva. This seepage is normal. If continuous bleeding occurs, it may be controlled by placing a moist fresh tea bag over the area with constant pressure for 20 minutes (repeat if necessary). If you notice small jelly like clots do not disturb the area. They will dry out and fall off.

POSTURE

Keep your head in an elevated position for the first 2 days following surgery. Sleep with a few pillows behind you. Maintaining an up-right position will help reduce swelling.

DIET

Try to eat on the side of the mouth where surgery was not performed. Stay on a cold liquid diet the day of surgery (milk shakes, instant breakfast, etc.). The day following surgery, begin eating soft foods until gradually returning to your normal diet. Adequate nutrition is essential for healing. Avoid irritating foods that are spicy or acidic and carbonated beverages for at least 3 days. Foods such as popcorn, nuts, granola and small seeds should be avoided for the first month.

ORAL HYGIENE AND RINSING

The day following your surgery carefully brush and floss your teeth in the areas where surgery has not been performed. If the surgery was performed in your entire mouth, please avoid brushing until sutures are removed.

Rinse Gently with Listerine Zero: This product takes the place of brushing the teeth in the surgical area. It can be purchased at most local grocery stores for your convenience.

Surgical Stents: Plastic stents are provided for patients having tissue grafting to protect the donor site. Please leave in the stent for the first 24 hours, as it is applying pressure to the palate to prevent swelling and helps with clotting, this includes sleeping with it for the first **24 hours**.

After the first **24 hours**, use the stent while eating but take it out from time to time during the day to allow the donor site to heal faster.

SOFT TISSUE GRAFTS HEALING AND APPEARANCE

The gum tissue in the surgical areas may appear white in color especially if a gum graft has been performed. This is because the mouth is moist and a hard scab does not form. This is common and there is no need for concern. Another reason that you may notice a white coating over the gum in the surgical areas is that plaque deposits are accumulating because you cannot brush as usual. The plaque deposits will be cleaned away at your suture removal appointment.

PERIODONTAL DRESSING

Sometimes, but not all the time, your doctor may place a periodontal dressing over the gum graft. This is done if the doctor thinks that the gum graft needs extra protection during the initial few days of healing. It is usual for the periodontal dressing to become brittle over time and it may start to crack or come off completely. At the time of your gum graft surgery your doctor will advise you whether or not you need to contact the doctor if the periodontal dressing cracks or comes off.

ALCOHOL AND SMOKING

Avoid alcohol for the first week following surgery. Do not drink alcohol if you are taking discomfort medication. Do not smoke for at least 4 hours following surgery. Smoking causes healing to progress more slowly.

Minimize smoking and alcoholic beverages for the entire healing time for optimal healing.

ACTIVITY

Do not engage in strenuous activity during the coming week. The use of discomfort medication will reduce your precision in judgement.

If any questions or concerns occur, please do not hesitate to contact the office at 303-695-0990. There is a 24-hour personal answering service through which we can always be reached.

Alan Z. Pomeranz, DMD, MMSc* — Emilio I. Argüello, DMD, MMSc*
Eduardo Marcuschamer, DMD* — Neil Neugeboren, DDS, MA

*Diplomate, American Board of Periodontology

36903.90SEMITEST.S\$ENVER, #/80237
(/) 303.695.0990 s (&) 303.695.6915
info@yourdentalimplants.com
www.yourdentalimplants.com

Recommended Food List Following Surgery

We encourage our patients to prepare ahead for their surgery to help have a more predictable recovery. Below is the recommended list of foods we suggest:

- Hearty soups*
- Yogurt, popsicles, ice cream
- Pudding, Custard, Jello
- Soft fruits (ie: banana, canned peaches, applesauce)
- Cooked vegetables
- Fruit smoothies/protein shakes (no seeded fruits ie: strawberries, raspberries)
- Eggs
- Cream of Wheat *
- Mashed Potatoes
- Pasta (avoid red sauce)
- Fish and ground beef
- Mac & Cheese
- Plenty of fluids

*room temperature (colder items will help with swelling)

Please **AVOID** using straws and the following foods for the first week following surgery:

- Seeded fruits (ie: strawberries, raspberries)
- Foods above room temperature (ie: hot soups, hot coffee)
- Foods that are difficult to chew (ie: steak)
- Food that can get trapped easily (ie: popcorn, nuts, seeded fruits)
- Crunchy items (ie: breads, bagels, cookies, potato chips)
- Citrus fruits/juices (ie: orange juice, tomatoes)
- Spicy foods
- Alcoholic beverages (including beer and wine)

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