



Great Bay Oral Surgery
A S S O C I A T E S P A
Center for Dental Implants

Postoperative Instructions

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We are committed to providing the same quality of care following procedures that began during your initial visit. To that end, please refer to some general postoperative guidelines below and, by all means CALL at any hour of any day to report a continuing problem of lingering concern.

The Day of Surgery

1. Do not disturb the area of surgery. The first stages of healing are aided by placing tissues at rest. Avoid vigorous chewing, excessive spitting or rinsing as initial healing may be delayed, active bleeding restarted, or infection introduced.

2. Expect minor bleeding or “oozing” from the operative site. For the first hour, keep firm pressure on the area of surgery by biting on the gauze sponge placed in your mouth at the office. If bleeding persists, continue pressure on a fresh sponge for an additional 30 minutes to one hour. Biting on a moist tea bag wrapped in gauze may help control persistent oozing from the surgical site. If active bleeding should recur at any time, carefully rinse your mouth with cold water to remove any blood clots and apply a fresh gauze sponge to the bleeding site. Firm pressure for 15-30 minutes usually controls the problem. Should active bleeding persist, please call the office.

3. Limit physical activity during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Over exertion may lead to postoperative bleeding and discomfort. When you lie down, keep your head elevated on a pillow.

4. Some degree of discomfort and pain arise as numbness subsides. At the first sign of pain or discomfort, take one or two Advil, Tylenol, or Aspirin and repeat every 4 hours as necessary, or take the pain medication prescribed according to the instructions on the container.

5. Pain following oral surgery, especially the removal of an impacted tooth, will be most severe within the first 6-8 hours after the operation. To limit the amount of pain, you should take the medication prescribed in accordance with the instructions given. Please do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking prescription pain medication. Do not wait for the pain to become unbearable before using the pain tablets as it will then be more difficult to control. Moderate to severe pain usually does not last longer than 24-48 hours and there should be no more than slight

pain or discomfort after the third day. Persistent or increasing pain 3 to 4 days following oral surgery may be caused by early loss of the blood clot ("dry socket") or infection. If you feel that this may be occurring to you, please contact us so that we can help make you more comfortable.

6. Swelling related to the surgical procedure usually develops during the first 12-24 hours following surgery, often increasing on the second day. It should begin to subside by the third day. Swelling can be minimized by applying an ice pack to the side of your face for 20-30 minutes every hour while you are awake during the 24 hours following the surgery, unless you receive special instructions.

7. Fluid intake is important! Drink all the fluids you desire: water, milk, milk shakes, tea, soda, broth, soups and juices are good examples. Avoid hot liquids today.

8. Avoid using a straw for several days as it may cause the blood clot to dis-lodge and delay healing.

9. Soft, cool foods that require little or no chewing are most easily tolerated at this time, for example, soups, custard, Jello, yogurt, or ice cream. However, food selection is largely a matter of your choice.

10. Take any special medication we have prescribed on the specified dosing schedule.

11. Take any regularly scheduled medication (for diabetes, high blood pressure, etc.) on your regular schedule unless advised to do otherwise.

12. Try to avoid smoking completely as it tends to slow the healing process and may also contribute to the development of a "dry socket."

13. Do not drive an automobile for 24 hours following surgery if you have had intravenous sedation or if you are taking prescription pain medication.

14. If you were informed that a sinus communication occurred during surgery as a result of the close relationship between the roots of your upper teeth and your sinuses, please follow these instructions:

- a) Do not blow your nose.
- b) Do not sneeze through your nose. If the urge to sneeze arises, sneeze with your mouth open.
- c) Do not smoke or use a straw.
- d) Avoid swimming and strenuous exercise for at least one week.
- e) It is not uncommon to have a slight amount of bleeding from the nose for several days.
- f) Please remember that occasionally a second procedure may be required if there is a persistent communication.

The Day Following Surgery and Thereafter

- 1. On the morning of the day following surgery, rinse your mouth carefully with a solution made by adding ½ teaspoon of salt to a large glass of warm water.** Repeat three times a day until remaining soreness subsides. Resume brushing any remaining teeth and your regular oral hygiene as soon as possible.
- 2. Do not worry about stitches.** Sutures may have been placed to control bleeding and aid healing. Sutures will be removed easily and painlessly at a later appointment, if needed. If they fall out they do not have to be replaced.
- 3. Any swelling, soreness, or “stiffness of the jaw muscles”** can be relieved by applying a warm, moist towel to the affected side of the face several times a day. Take any prescribed pain medication as directed. Use the warm rinses described above. If swelling, tenderness, or pain should increase after the first few days, return to the office for an examination.
- 4. Sometimes a soft diet may be necessary** for the first few days following surgery. Most patients are able to resume regular food intake within a short time.
- 5. Black and blue marks may appear** on the skin of the face during the first few days after surgery. Moist heat application will help relieve this condition.

What are Dry Sockets?

Dry sockets continue to be the most common problem people experience following dental surgery. They arise due to premature loss of the blood clot in the empty tooth socket and affect approximately 1 out of 5 patients. This seems to occur with greater frequency in people who smoke or are taking birth control pills. While both jaws can be affected, they usually occur in the lower jaw on the third to fifth day. They cause a deep, dull continuous aching on the affected side(s). Patients may first notice the pain starting in the ear radiating down towards the chin. It frequently begins in the middle of the night and pain medication usually doesn't help.

Treatment involves placing a medicated dressing in the “empty” tooth socket(s). This will help decrease the pain and protect the socket from food particles. The effectiveness in alleviating the pain lasts for 24-48 hours and usually will require dressing changes every day or two for seven to ten days. Dressings usually are removed when you have been pain free for two to three days. At your one week follow-up, an irrigation device may be given to you to help keep food particles from lodging in the extraction site.



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Faithful compliance with these instructions will add to your comfort and hasten your recovery.

Be sure to follow these instructions carefully. Only in this way will you avoid the complications which lead to unnecessary discomfort and delayed recovery. Should any undue reaction or complications arise, notify the office immediately.

If you need to contact one of us after office hours, please call the office at the number listed at the top of this page or on the front of this booklet.

We make every attempt to answer our emergency pages as promptly as possible.

Occasionally, your messages do not reach our pagers. If you do not hear from us within one-half hour, please call back and follow the prompts to page the office again. Do this until your page has been answered.

If at any time, you feel this is a life threatening emergency call 911 or go to the local emergency room.