



TOOTHOLGY

Implant Home Care Instructions

Following dental implant placement, never chew directly over the surgical site, and start taking your pain medications immediately while your mouth is still numb to prevent severe breakthrough pain. Unlike a tooth extraction which leaves an open bony socket, an implant involves a closed metal fixture anchored into the jawbone, requiring strict protection of the healing gums and possible underlying bone graft.

Specialized Pain and Medication Management

- **Preemptive OTC Dosing:** Take 400mg of Ibuprofen or 500mg of Acetaminophen before the local anesthesia completely wears off.
- **Alternating Protocol:** For moderate pain, alternate 800mg of Ibuprofen and 500mg of Acetaminophen every 4 hours.
- **Prescription Antibiotics:** Take your prescribed antibiotics exactly as directed and finish the entire bottle. This prevents bacterial contamination, which is a leading cause of early implant failure.
- **Manage Stomach Discomfort:** Always eat a few spoonfuls of soft food before taking pain relievers or antibiotics to avoid postoperative nausea.

Bleeding Control & Protecting the Implant Site

- **Bite Gently on Gauze:** Keep a gauze pad over the site with firm, steady biting pressure for 30 to 45 minutes right after surgery. Minor pink ooze or blood-tinged saliva is normal for the first 24 hours.
- **Do Not Disturb the Site:** Leave the area alone. Do not touch the implant, metal healing cap, or stitches with your tongue, fingers, or toothbrush.
- **Avoid Negative Pressure:** Absolutely no spitting, smoking, or drinking through straws for at least the first 5 to 7 days. The suction can pull at the gum line and compromise the underlying blood clot or bone graft.

Swelling Reduction Timeline

- **Day 1 to 2 (Ice):** Apply an ice pack wrapped in a cloth to your cheek on a "20 minutes on, 20 minutes off" rotation for the first 36 to 48 hours. This drastically reduces facial swelling, which typically peaks on the third day.
- **Day 3 Onward (Heat):** If your jaw feels stiff or swollen after 48 hours, transition to a warm, moist washcloth on your cheek to relax the muscles and speed up tissue healing.

- **Sleep Elevation:** Keep your head elevated on 2 to 3 pillows for the first 3 nights to lower localized blood pressure and minimize throbbing.

Diet, Hygiene, and Appliance Restrictions

- **Soft & Cool Diet:** For the first 24 to 48 hours, consume only cool or room-temperature liquids and purees (smoothies, protein shakes, applesauce, yogurt). Avoid hot foods and hot coffee, as heat promotes bleeding.
- **Chew on the Opposite Side:** Transition to soft solids (scrambled eggs, pasta, mashed potatoes) for the first week, but chew strictly on the side away from the implant. Avoid sharp, crunchy, or seedy foods (like popcorn or berries) that can wedge under the gums.
- **Modified Hygiene:** Do not brush the implant site on the day of surgery, but brush your other teeth normally. Starting on day two, you may gently brush the surrounding teeth and use a prescribed mouthwash or warm saltwater rinse (1/2 teaspoon of salt in warm water) after every meal. Do not swish forcefully.
- **Denture Restrictions:** If you wear a temporary flipper, partial, or full denture, do not wear it unless your surgeon explicitly adjusted it to prevent it from pressing down on the new implant.

When to Call Your Dentist

Contact our office if you experience:

- Severe throbbing pain that worsens after 3 days and is unresponsive to medications.
- A loose implant or a healing cap that has completely unthreaded and fallen out.
- Continuous bright red bleeding that does not slow down with direct pressure.
- A fever over 101°F or foul-tasting fluid/pus draining from the surgical site.