



TOOTHLOGY

Immediate Overdenture Home Care Instructions

Immediate Post-Operative Care (First 24 Hours)

- **Bite on gauze:** Keep firm pressure on the gauze pads for 30 to 45 minutes. Replace them if they become soaked.
- **Do not disturb wounds:** Avoid spitting, rinsing, or touching the surgical sites with your tongue or fingers.
- **Wearing your denture:** You may wear your removable denture for the first 24 hours following your procedures to aid in blood clotting and swelling. Following the first day, leaving the prosthesis out more frequently may allow surgical sites to heal more quickly and easily.
- **Apply cold packs:** Place ice wrapped in a cloth on your face near the surgical area. Use a 20-minute-on, 20-minute-off cycle to reduce swelling.
- **Rest quietly:** Keep your head elevated on pillows. Avoid physical exertion, lifting, or bending over.
- **Sedation:** If you had any form of sedation, you may experience light-headedness, nausea, dizziness, and sleepiness following surgery. A responsible adult should stay with you for 12 hours after surgery. In some instances, anti-nausea medications may be prescribed.

Pain Management Protocol

- **Take medication early:** Take your first dose of pain medication before the local anesthesia completely wears off.
- **Use scheduled anti-inflammatories:** If prescribed, take Ibuprofen (600–800 mg) every 6 to 8 hours to manage inflammation.
- **Layer acute pain relief:** If pain persists, rotate Acetaminophen (Tylenol) between your Ibuprofen doses, keeping under 3,000 mg of Tylenol per 24 hours.
- **Use narcotics with caution:** Take prescribed opioid medications only for severe breakthrough pain. Avoid driving or operating machinery while taking them.
- **Finish all antibiotics:** If prescribed, complete the entire course of antibiotics exactly as directed, even if you feel completely fine.
- **Steroids:** In some circumstances, steroids may be prescribed before or after your procedure. Finish this course all the way through to completion.

Bleeding and Swelling Control

- **Expect minor oozing:** Saliva tinged with blood is normal for the first 24 to 48 hours.
- **Use damp tea bags:** If bleeding increases, bite firmly on a damp black tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid helps form clots.
- **Anticipate peak swelling:** Swelling usually peaks between the first and the third day after surgery. It will gradually subside after that.
- **Switch to moist heat:** After 36 hours, stop using ice packs. Apply warm, moist compresses to your face to help reduce remaining swelling and stiffness.

Oral Hygiene and Cleaning

- **No rinsing on Day 1:** Avoid all rinsing or spitting for the first 24 hours to protect the blood clots.
- **Gentle warm salt rinses:** Starting Day 2, dissolve 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water. Gently rinse 4 to 5 times a day. In some cases, certain mouth rinses may be substituted.
- **Brush remaining teeth carefully:** Clean your natural teeth normally, but completely avoid touching the surgical wounds with your toothbrush.

Diet and Nutrition

- **Stick to cold liquids first:** Drink plenty of fluids on the first day, but avoid hot liquids and alcoholic beverages.
- **Do not use straws:** The suction created by using a straw can dislodge blood clots and cause dry sockets or bleeding.
- **Eat soft foods only:** Transition to high-protein, soft foods like yogurt, applesauce, mashed potatoes, and scrambled eggs for the first week.
- **Avoid sharp or crunchy foods:** Do not eat chips, nuts, popcorn, or seeds, which can easily lodge in the surgical sites.

Overdenture Usage

- **Follow specific timeline:** Do not insert your overdenture until your dentist clears you to wear it.
- **Clean the denture daily:** Once cleared to wear it, brush the overdenture outside of your mouth with a soft brush and non-abrasive soap.
- **Keep implants clean:** Use a super-soft toothbrush to clean the implant attachments inside your mouth once healing allows. In many circumstances, implants may not be exposed until the implants have healed after several months.
- **Never sleep with dentures:** Remove the overdenture every night to give your gums and implant sites a chance to breathe.

What to Avoid

- **No smoking:** Avoid smoking or vaping for at least 7 to 14 days. Nicotine drastically reduces blood flow and causes implant failure.

- **No spitting:** Swallow your saliva normally instead of spitting to avoid creating negative pressure in your mouth.
- **No strenuous exercise:** Skip the gym, heavy lifting, and running for 1 week to keep your blood pressure stable.

When to Call the Doctor

- **Uncontrollable bleeding:** Call if bleeding remains heavy and bright red even after biting on gauze or tea bags.
- **Severe, worsening pain:** Contact the office if pain increases sharply after the third day or is not relieved by medication.
- **High fever:** Seek guidance if your body temperature rises above 101°F (38.3°C).
- **Persistent numbness:** Call if the numbness in your lip, chin, or tongue lasts more than 24 hours after surgery.
- **Denture pressure points:** Contact your dentist immediately if the overdenture rubs against your gums and creates painful sores.

Care Guidelines: Weeks 2 to 6 (The Initial Healing Phase)

- **Transition to soft-chew foods:** Gradually advance from a purely soft diet to foods like pasta, cooked vegetables, fish, and soft chicken. Avoid hard, crunchy, or sticky foods.
- **Resume thorough brushing:** Gently brush around the surgical areas using a post-surgical, ultra-soft toothbrush. Clean any exposed implant abutments or healing caps.
- **Keep the overdenture clean:** Brush your temporary or adjusted denture daily with a non-abrasive denture paste or liquid soap. Always rinse it thoroughly with cool water.
- **Soak the denture nightly:** Place your removable overdenture in a cleaning solution or plain water overnight. This relieves pressure on your healing tissues.
- **Monitor your gum health:** Watch for signs of gum overgrowth, severe redness, or persistent bleeding around the healing caps. Call your dentist if these occur.
- **Attend your follow-up visits:** See your dentist for scheduled suture removal, tissue checkups, and necessary adjustments to the denture base.

Care Guidelines: Weeks 6 to 12 (The Osseointegration Phase)

- **Avoid heavy biting pressure:** Your implants are undergoing osseointegration, where bone bonds to the titanium. Avoid chewing tough meats, hard bread, or raw vegetables.
- **Clean attachments diligently:** If your implants are fitted with healing caps or locator attachments, clean around them twice daily using a soft brush or cotton swabs dipped in alcohol-free mouthwash.
- **Never pick at the implants:** Avoid using toothpicks, fingernails, or sharp metal tools to remove trapped food near the implant sites.

- **Use a water flosser cautiously:** If cleared by your surgeon, use a water flosser on the lowest pressure setting to flush debris out from under your temporary denture.
- **Report structural changes:** Contact your dentist immediately if your temporary overdenture cracks, loses a tooth, or begins to rock unevenly on your gums.

Pain and Complication Management (Long-Term)

- **Expect zero resting pain:** You should not experience throbbing pain or discomfort during this phase. Persistent pain indicates a complication.
- **Watch for implant mobility:** If you notice a healing cap or an implant attachment feels loose when touched, contact your surgical team right away.
- **Identify late-stage infections:** Watch for localized swelling, a bad taste, or pus draining from the gums. These are signs of infection requiring immediate antibiotics.
- **Manage minor gum irritation:** If the denture rubs or pinches your tissues, leave it out for a few hours and schedule a denture adjustment. Do not attempt to adjust it yourself.
- **Alcohol and Smoking:** Alcohol is strictly prohibited for the first few days and best if consumed only sparingly for the next 3 weeks. Alcohol inhibits healing which is most critical for 3 weeks post-operatively. Do not smoke the week before and for three weeks following your surgery. It is typically not recommended that heavy tobacco users have complex implant procedures because smoking increases the risk of implant failure. If you cannot stop smoking altogether, expect some compromise of early healing.