

Post-Operative Instructions For Patients of Dr. Shanks

If you've recently had a treatment and forgot what we went over after your procedure we've got you covered. Check out our suite of online post-operative instructions on how to take care of yourself after treatment.

Restorative Post Operative Care

Congratulations on taking steps to improve your health! Your anesthesia will wear off in approximately 2 to 4 hours after the procedure. It is very important not to chew on the numb side of your mouth until the anesthesia wears off (This is to prevent biting your tongue and lip).

Your tooth (or teeth) may be sensitive to hot, cold, or pressure from the procedure and you may experience soreness in your jaw muscles. This is completely normal. The possible symptoms of hot, cold, pressure or general soreness will cease within a few days to a couple of weeks. As long as your teeth and gums are continuing to feel better everything is fine. There is no need for concern.

Tissue Graft Post-Operative Care

There is no healing that occurs for the first 24 hours after a surgical procedure. The natural response to "injury" is swelling. The body always responds to an injury with a predictable inflammatory response, as the first step towards healing. Our Post-Op instructions are designed to set up an environment of minimal swelling. Your grafting procedure was performed using a minimally invasive pouch procedure. Because it is a "closed" site, it is more subject to post-operative swelling. It is very important that the post-operative instructions are followed.

Care of the Mouth

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Electric Toothbrushes/Waterpiks

DO NOT use an electric toothbrush (Sonicare or Oral B) or Waterpik for at least 8 weeks following surgery

Eating

FIRST 24 HOURS- Adequate nutrition is essential for normal healing. Following surgery, your diet should be restricted to cold liquids. Yogurt, smoothies, milkshakes, and dietary supplements such as Instant Breakfast or Ensure are good choices. AVOID PEROXIDE, ALCOHOL, CARBONATED BEVERAGES, AND DRINKING THROUGH A STRAW.

We recommend taking Aleve for the next 3 days. This is not only for the pain but will help reduce the inflammation in the area that was worked on and will help heal properly and quickly if taken as directed. If you are allergic to or cannot tolerate NSAIDS (Naproxen, Motrin, Advil, etc) or if you are pregnant, do not take this medication. Tylenol can be used instead and also works as an excellent pain reliever. If discomfort continues for more than a couple of weeks please call our office. You may notice the new dental work will feel different to your tongue. This is normal and it should feel perfect within a few days.

Activities

REST – Plan to rest at home the remainder of the day of surgery and the following day. You may read, watch TV, or work at your desk at home. When sleeping, elevate your head to decrease swelling.

AFTER 24 HOURS – You may return to the normal daily routine, but avoid strenuous activities such as heavy lifting, or exercise programs that elevate your heart rate for one week following surgery.

Medications

PAIN MEDICATIONS – Take pain medication within one hour after treatment with milk, fruit juice, or a full glass of water. Never take pain medication on an empty stomach. This medication may be repeated every three to four hours needed for discomfort. DO NOT USE ASPIRIN or products containing aspirin for one week following surgery. Aspirin, Advil, and Aleve can contribute to bleeding problems. Only the non-aspirin pain reliever, Tylenol is acceptable.

Antibiotics

Take prescribed antibiotics as directed until all have been taken. You will begin this medication the day prior to surgery.

Swelling

Swelling is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. Your swelling may increase until 3 days post-operatively. This is totally normal. If you experience an increase in swelling beyond the third day or an increase in discomfort, call our office.

You may also notice that your bite feels different than it did before. This is normal with dental work but if it still feels "off" after two weeks, please call our office to have it adjusted. Please also let us know if you get food or floss caught in the area that we worked on, or if you are unhappy with the way things look at all, as we want to make sure you get the very best. If you have any questions or concerns please call us at (931) 787-1718. Thank you for choosing our office to help with your oral health care. We really appreciate your trust and the opportunity to serve you in dentistry.

Ice Packs

To help minimize swelling, we will send you home with ice packs. Place the pack on the outside of your face, over the treated area, for 20 minutes on and 2 hours off. Continue to alternate 20 minutes on 2 hours off for the first 24 hours after surgery, during waking hours.

Bleeding

Because your graft was in a pouch, there will be minimal visible bleeding that will show in your mouth. Sometimes any bleeding in your mouth that mixes with saliva can look like more than it is. If excessive bleeding occurs, please call our office.

Smoking

DO NOT SMOKE for three weeks after surgery. Smoking is detrimental to healing tissues and will affect the results of surgery.

Sutures

We do not use the type of sutures that dissolve by themselves for grafting procedures. This type of suture begins breaking down around 7-10 days after placement. When they start to dissolve it causes inflammation at the surgical site. Inflammation is not good for the graft and causes an adverse reaction. We have used a suture that is non-resorbable. This type of suture we use is very clean and actually repels bacteria. Your sutures will be removed at the two-month post-op visit. There will be very little sensation associated with suture removal and requires no anesthesia.

In Case of Problems

If you should have any problems such as excessive bleeding, pain, or difficulty in opening your mouth, call our office immediately for further instructions or additional treatment at (931) 787-1718.

Oral Surgery Post-Operative Care

Care of the Mouth

Care of the mouth following a surgical procedure is essential in the healing process. There is a certain amount of swelling, discoloration, discomfort, and bleeding which can be expected. Do not rinse your mouth for 24 hours following surgery. After 24 hours, begin gentle, warm salt water rinses for one week and resume gentle brushing of remaining teeth. Avoid the use of alcohol, smoking, or carbonated drinks for 24-48 hours after surgery. Also, avoid spitting and use of a straw as they may provoke oozing. This may interfere with clot formation and slow the healing process.

To Control Bleeding

Keep your head elevated above your heart for the first 24 hours. Bite down on gauze, applying slight pressure to help slow bleeding. Replace the gauze when it becomes saturated or every 20-30 minutes or until the gauze is a light pink color. If active bleeding has not stopped in 6 hours following the procedure, gently bite down on a dry tea bag.

Implant Post-Operative Care

Care of the Mouth

1. Healing abutment may/may not be visible through your very important that you do not put pressure on the implant area. Chewing on the implant/healing abutment prior to the implant being fully integrated with your jaw bone can lead to implant failure.
2. You may have sutures placed in the gum tissue surrounding the implant. These will usually fall out or dissolve between 2-10 days.
3. Try not to touch the surgical site with your fingers to avoid introducing new bacteria to the area.
4. Refrain from brushing directly in the surgical site for at least 2 weeks following surgery. The gum tissue needs time to heal and after your 2-week post op visit you will be given the O.K. to gently brush the top of the healing cap.
5. Avoid using electric toothbrushes and Waterpiks around the implant until the final crown is placed.
6. Smoking can put a patient at higher risk for implant failure. If you are a smoker we highly encourage refraining from smoking for at least 5 days following surgery.

Minimize Swelling & Discomfort

Swelling is usually in proportion to the surgery involved. However, it may be minimized by the immediate use of an ice pack or frozen bag of vegetables applied to the outside of the face over the surgical area. Use the ice for 20 minutes on and 2 hours off. Ice is very beneficial for the first 48 hours.

Medications

It is essential to take all medications as directed as they will help control pain and prevent infection. Begin taking and completely finish the antibiotics prescribed. Take the prescribed narcotic medication only if you are experiencing significant pain. Anti-inflammatories are also recommended if you do not have any known allergies to Ibuprofen or Aleve. NOTE: Antibiotics may decrease the effectiveness of birth control medications. Additional methods of birth control should be used while on antibiotics.

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Maintain a Proper Diet

Have your meals at the usual time. Eat soft, nutritious food and drink plenty of liquids with meals and in between. Have what you wish, but be careful to not chew directly on the extraction site. Add solid foods to your diet as soon as they are comfortable to chew.

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Remember Your Follow-Up Visit

You are scheduled to return for a postoperative visit to make certain healing is progressing satisfactorily. In the meantime, maintain a healthful diet, observe rules for proper oral hygiene, and call our office if you have any questions.

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