



## Post-Operative Guide: Dental Implants

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### Section 1: First 24 Hours

#### What to Expect

- **Pain:** Depends on number of implants and other procedures (extractions, bone grafting, etc.). More procedures = more pain. Worst usually in first 1–3 days.  
→ If pain **increases again between days 3–7**, call our office.
  - **Bleeding:** Light bleeding for up to 24 hours is normal. Blood mixed with saliva looks heavier than it is. A little bleeding at bedtime is OK—use a towel on your pillow.
  - **Swelling:** Related to number of implants and size of any graft. Swelling is usually worst days 1–4 and improves by days 7–10.  
→ If swelling **increases again between days 3–7**, call us.
  - **Sutures:** You may feel them with your tongue—**do not touch or pull them**.
    - Dissolving sutures may come out **2–14 days** after surgery.
    - Non-dissolving sutures are removed in our office **2–6 weeks** after surgery.
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#### Strict No-Can-Do's

- No rinsing for **24 hours**.
  - No spitting, straws, suction, or pulling your lip/cheek to look at the site for **7 days**.
  - No rubbing or pressing on your face if bone grafting was done for **3 months**.
  - No smoking or alcohol for **3 days**.
  - No heavy activity (exercise, mowing, vacuuming, shoveling, sports) for **5 days**.
  - No **hot** foods or drinks (warm is OK) for **7 days**.
  - No spicy foods, chips, popcorn, carbonated drinks, or acidic juices (orange, grapefruit, etc.) for **14 days**.
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#### Things You SHOULD Do

- **Gauze / Pressure:**  
If gauze was placed, bite gently but firmly **without talking** for **1 hour**.  
If bleeding continues, replace with damp gauze and bite for **30 minutes**. Change every **30–45 minutes** as needed.
- **Cold Packs:**  
20 minutes on / 20 minutes off for the first **36 hours** next to the surgical area.
- **Medications:**  
Take all prescribed medications as directed, with food unless told otherwise.
- **Oral Hygiene:**
  - No rinsing for **24 hours**.
  - Starting the **next day**, you may brush and floss everywhere **except directly on the surgical site** (skip that area up to 2 weeks if needed).
  - **Do NOT use a Waterpik or water flosser** near the implant site—they are too traumatic.
  - You may gently use prescription rinse. Do **not** rinse vigorously—just gently move your head side to side.
- **Diet – First 24 Hours (Cold Only):**  
Soft, cool foods. Small bites. Chew away from the surgery.



- **Drinks:** smoothies, protein shakes, iced tea, milk, milkshakes (no straws), Boost/Ensure/Muscle Milk, water
  - **Main:** cold pasta, cold soup, cold mashed potatoes
  - **Desserts:** applesauce, pudding, Jell-O, mousse, yogurt
  - **Vitamin Support:**  
Take a **high-quality multivitamin with Vitamin D**. We recommend **DentaMedica Recovery Kit**, designed for healing after dental surgery.
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## Section 2: Days 2–14

### What to Expect

- **Pain:** Day 2 can be as bad or worse than day 1. Pain usually peaks during the first **3 days** and should be mostly gone by **10–14 days**.  
→ If pain or swelling **increases again between days 3–7**, call us.
- **Bleeding:** Light pink “oozing” is normal. If **heavy** bleeding continues past **day 2**, call the office.
- **Swelling:** May increase on day 2, then usually levels off by **day 3** and begins to decrease by **days 4–5**.  
→ If swelling increases again between days 3–7, call us.
- **Bruising:** Common; may be black, blue, green, or yellow. Usually gone by **7 days**, sometimes lasts up to **14 days**.

### Things You SHOULD Do

- **Warm Packs:**  
After **24–36 hours**, you may switch from cold to warm packs (gentle warmth only).
  - **Diet – Days 2–14 (Soft, Warm or Cold – Never Hot):**  
**Rule:** If you can **easily pinch through it**, you can eat it.  
Continue small bites and chew away from the surgical site.
    - **Drinks:** apple cider, coffee, tea (green, black, herbal)
    - **Breakfast:** scrambled eggs, omelets, oatmeal, French toast, pancakes, waffles, soft cereals
    - **Meals:** soups, pasta, baked/steamed fish, frittata, stews, crock-pot meals, slow-cooked meats and veggies, mac and cheese, meatloaf
  - **Vitamins:**  
Continue multivitamin with **Vitamin D**.
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## Section 3: Day 15 and On

### What to Expect

- **Pain & Swelling:**  
You should not have major pain going into the **third week**. New or worsening pain or swelling—call us.
- **Sutures:**
  - Dissolvable sutures are usually gone by now.
  - Non-dissolving sutures are typically removed at your **2-week post-op** visit (sometimes later).
  - If you still feel a suture that should be gone, call the office.

### Things to Avoid



- No Waterpik close to the surgical site for **1 month**.
- If bone grafting was done, avoid pressing or massaging the area for **3 months**—the bone must heal without outside pressure.

#### Things You **SHOULD** Do

- You should feel close to normal by week 2.
- Stop using the prescription oral rinse.
- Brush and floss carefully around the surgical area but **keep it very clean**.

#### Diet – Longer Term

- Continue small bites, chew on the **opposite side** of surgery.
- If surgery was done on **both sides**, continue the **soft diet (Days 2–14 foods)** until your **3–4 month healing check**.
- Continue multivitamin with **Vitamin D**.

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#### Implant Integration

- Implants fuse to the bone (**Osseointegration**) over about **3–6 months**, depending on:
  - Your overall health
  - Amount of grafting
  - Bone quality

#### Uncovering Your Implant (if covered)

- If your implant is under the gum, it will be **uncovered** after healing.
- At the uncovering visit:
  - A small opening is made in the gum.
  - A **Healing Cap** is attached to the implant and extends slightly above the gum to shape the tissue and create access for the future crown.

#### Your Final Crown

- After the Healing Cap is placed, the gums need **at least 2 weeks** (sometimes longer) to stabilize.
- When the gums are stable, your general/restorative dentist designs and places your **final crown**.

#### Section 4: Maintaining Your Results

##### Daily Home Care

- **Brushing:**  
Brush your teeth and implants **twice daily for 2 minutes**.  
Focus on the **gum line**, not just the crown. Bacteria that cause implant disease hide between implant and gums.
- **Flossing:**  
Floss your teeth and implants **once daily**.  
Implants are circular—floss them like you're **polishing a shoe or drying with a towel**. Ask us to show you the technique.
- **Dental Visits:**
  - If you have a history of periodontal (gum) disease: visit your dentist **every 3 months**.
  - If you do not: at least **every 6 months**.

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#### Implant Disease Is Sneaky

- Implants **don't have nerves**, so early disease usually **doesn't hurt**.
- Infections can “smolder” under the gums until damage is severe.



- By the time you feel pain, damage may already be **irreversible**.

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### **Risk Factors to Reduce or Eliminate**

Factors linked to early implant loss or implant disease:

- History of **periodontal disease**
- **Smoking** (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, marijuana, vaping)
- **Poorly controlled diabetes**
- **Cardiovascular disease**
- **SSRI medications**
- **Vitamin D deficiency**

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### **Emergency Contact**

- Dr. John Thousand – 303-250-4091
- Dr. Hailey McKinley – 812-661-0931
- Dr. Michael Romani – 559-300-9953
- Dr. Jessica Koster – 214-608-8046

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### **Scan for Instructions**

- **Post-op instructions for dental implants** – scan this code →



- **Instructions for cleaning dental implants** – scan this code →

