



## Post-operative instructions after periodontal surgery

Following any type of periodontal or implant surgery, patients may experience varying degrees of discomfort. The human body will try and heal itself following any surgery. What a patient experiences after surgery is usually dependant on the duration and complexity of the procedure and the amount of bone surgery necessary.

In addition, there is a reasonable degree of individual variation between patients. Different individuals may experience different levels of pain and swelling, even if they have had the same procedure performed. The age, resilience and general health of the patient all play a part in modulating the post-surgical experience. All of these factors also reflect the individual nature of each person's disease.

A post-operative appointment will usually be scheduled for 7-10 days following surgery. At this appointment, the periodontist will ensure that there is no infection present and remove any stitches that are still present.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT FOLLOWING PERIODONTAL SURGERY.**

**1. Pain.** An amount of pain is to be expected. This may be controlled with any or a combination of the following:

**Analgesics:** Medications such as Paracetamol (Panadol) or Paracetamol and Codeine (Panadeine) are effective. Otherwise, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) may also be used (Ibuprofen), unless you have a history of asthma, peptic ulcers or are pregnant. Aspirin containing drugs should NOT be used, as they tend to prevent normal blood clotting and if bleeding starts it will be prolonged.

**Cold Packs:** Local pain relief may be obtained using a cold pack. This may be an ice gel pack, or simply ice cubes wrapped in tea towel/face washer, or a pack of frozen peas. This should be applied on a ten minutes on, ten minutes off basis.

**2. Bleeding.** Some oozing of blood from the gums is common following surgery. This should be neither excessive, nor very light in colour. If this is the case, the surgery should be contacted. Control of bleeding is best achieved via firm pressure using folded gauze or a clean folded handkerchief. Press onto area and hold in place by either biting down or finger pressure for 20-30 minutes.

**3. Swelling.** Swelling is to be expected and the degree of swelling will vary between individuals, and depending upon the procedure. The use of cold packs and anti-inflammatory drugs (Ibuprofen) may help. Swelling is a sign of inflammation and is an indication that the body is trying to heal itself. Excessive swelling causing concern may warrant inspection. Should the swelling subside after a couple of days and then increase again 4-5 days later then the practice should be contacted.

### **ORAL HYGIENE AFTER PERIODONTAL SURGERY**

- Surgical sites will heal quickest and with least pain in a clean environment. This is best achieved using a combination of mechanical (tooth brushing and interdental brushes) and chemical (mouthwashes) techniques.

- Initially, mechanical cleaning should be performed for the whole mouth except for the area where the surgery has been performed. This is because brushing in the surgical area will disturb the healing of the gums and will shred the stitches that are supposed to hold the gums together as they heal. To clean the area where surgery has been performed, antibacterial mouthwash should be used. Mouthwashes containing Chlorhexidine (e.g. Savacol, Chlorohex)





are recommended. The mouthwash should be swished around in the surgical site for about 30 seconds before spitting it out. The mouth should not be rinsed out with water afterwards. The mouthwash should be used 2-3 times daily. Only a small amount of mouthwash (a capful) should be necessary.

- The use of warm salty water as a mouthwash should not be underestimated, as this will help clean the area, minimise swelling, and speed healing. This rinse is made by dissolving half a teaspoon of salt in a glass of lukewarm water. Hot water should be avoided.
- Following surgery a blood clot will form in the surgical area. It is important to not disturb this blood clot or else bleeding will occur. As such, there should be no rinsing with any water or mouthwash for the first day. After this, use of mouthwash may commence for 2-3 times a day.
- Several stitches will usually be present in the mouth following periodontal surgery. Although your tongue will find these stitches extremely irritating, it is important not to play around with them or try and pluck them out. Often, the stitches will dissolve away by themselves before the post-operative appointment and if this occurs then you shouldn't worry because the stitches have done their job by this stage.
- Mechanical cleaning of the surgical site should commence as soon as possible after the stitches are removed. Careful and gentle brushing of the area should be performed as thoroughly as discomfort allows. A soft head toothbrush should be used.

### **DO**

- \* *Keep the surgical site and the rest of your mouth **clean** at all times.*
- \* ***Use analgesics** such as Nurofen or Panadol as required. Follow the dosage guide on product pack.*
- \* *Keep your **head slightly elevated** if resting. This will minimize bleeding and throbbing in the area.*
- \* *Take **all prescribed antibiotics** if they have been given to you.*
- \* ***Eat soft foods** and, if possible try and chew on the opposite side of the mouth from where the surgery has been performed.*
- \* ***Contact the practice** if concerned, or if experiencing excessive bleeding or pain.*

### **DO NOT**

- \* ***Do not** rinse your mouth **excessively** as it will cause pain and start bleeding. Mouthwashes should be "rolled" around the mouth. **Do not** vigorously swish the mouthwash.*
- \* ***Do not perform physical exercise.** This may cause bleeding and pain.*
- \* ***Do not smoke.** Smoking delays healing and increases the risk of infection.*
- \* ***Do not drink alcohol.** It can delay clotting and if bleeding starts, it can take longer than usual to stop bleeding.*

**Please contact us on (07) 47282332 if you have any questions. We are here to help you.**

