



savannah periodontics  
PERIODONTICS AND IMPLANT DENTISTRY

# Implant Post-Operative Instructions

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*In order for your dental implant to heal properly, it is important to carefully follow these instructions. Once you've read through, please call or email the office if you still have questions. Contact information is listed on the reverse side.*

*During your surgery, a titanium dental implant was placed to replace the root of the tooth. A temporary crown or healing abutment may have been placed on top of the implant. Not following these instructions could affect the long-term success of the implant. To prevent complications, please read and follow the instructions below.*

## Do:

- **Take all of your medications as prescribed:** Antibiotics and pain meds are prescribed to help prevent infection and keep you comfortable after surgery. If you have side effects such as nausea, vomiting, or hives, discontinue and call Dr. O'Neill immediately. Do not drive or work while you are taking the pain medication.
- **Ice your face:** 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off. This is the most common thing that people forget to do, but is often the most helpful to prevent painful swelling and bruising. You may use an ice pack, zip-lock bags with ice, or a frozen bag of peas. Make sure to have a protective layer between your skin and the ice, such as a washcloth or paper towel. Continue icing until the swelling resolves, which could be 4-5 days.
- **Gently rinse with salt-water:** 1 teaspoon of salt in room-temperature water can be soothing to a sore surgery site. Do not use salt-water if you were prescribed Peridex Rinse.
- **Maintain a soft diet and chew away from the surgery site:** Eat only foods that are soft enough to cut with a fork and chew on the side opposite your surgery. If implants were placed in the front of your mouth, do not bite into anything. Avoid sharp foods that could injure the surgery site. If you were given a "flipper" to replace missing teeth, wear it during the day, but remove at night before you go to bed. If you have trouble removing the "flipper" or if it's uncomfortable, call Dr. O'Neill or your general dentist's office.
- **Place gentle pressure on the gum tissue if the implant site starts to bleed:** Most bleeding complications are caused by not icing or chewing over the implant. If this occurs, place folded gauze over the site and apply very gentle pressure for approximately 10-15 minutes. A cold, damp tea bag often helps stop bleeding. If bleeding persists, call Dr. O'Neill immediately. If you have a flipper, you may need to remove it to apply pressure.
- **Restrict physical activity:** Avoid strenuous activity for at least 72 hours after the surgery to reduce bleeding complications. Even bending over to lift something or tie your shoes can increase pressure enough to cause bleeding.
- **Rest!** You will heal faster and feel better if you allow yourself time to rest. When resting and sleeping, prop your head up slightly with pillows to decrease bleeding, bruising and swelling.

## Don't:

- **DON'T chew over the implant:** The implant must stay very still in the jaw in order to heal properly. Chewing over the implant causes slight movement and could cause implant failure over a period of time. If your implant has a temporary crown do not use it to bite into anything for at least 3-4 months. If there is a metal healing cap, try not to chew over it for at least 2 months.
- **DON'T drink through a straw:** This could cause the site to bleed. A straw may be used after 2-3 days.
- **DON'T cut or trim your sutures unless they are dangling:** As the sutures begin to dissolve, they will loosen. If sutures begin to unravel within the first several days, please notify the office or Dr. O'Neill. In cases of an immediate implant (where a tooth is extracted and an implant is placed the same day), you will likely not have any sutures.
- **DON'T brush over the surgery area:** You can brush all of your teeth except those involved in the surgery. If your teeth feel fuzzy or dirty, use a damp Q-tip to gently polish the enamel as long as you don't touch the gum tissue. Avoid mouth rinses that have alcohol as they will sting and inflame the surgery site. Begin brushing gently after the sutures fall out, or in about 5 days.
- **DON'T eat the following foods:** Citrus, spicy foods, alcohol, salt. As a general rule, don't eat anything that you wouldn't want to come into contact with a paper-cut on your finger!

If you are having minor complications after surgery or have questions, please call the office during business hours:

**Office: (912) 355-2688**

**Office Manager Email: [beth@savperio.com](mailto:beth@savperio.com)**

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If you are having serious complications after surgery or problems with medications prescribed after your surgery, you are welcome to call or text Dr. O'Neill on his cell phone. Please leave a detailed message if there is no answer.

**Cell Phone: (912) 655-5911**

**Email: [joneill@savperio.com](mailto:joneill@savperio.com)**

**Serious complications include:**

- Bleeding that will not stop after 15 minutes of firm pressure
- Severe pain that prevents you from sleeping or working
- Nausea/vomiting caused by the pain medications, antibiotics or other medications that were prescribed
- Allergic reactions to medications or products used in your surgery
- Painful swelling that is unusual in size
- Persistent fever, especially while on antibiotics

**Please only call or text Dr. O'Neill's cell phone for emergencies. To reschedule appointments, please make sure to call the office phone number.**

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***If you are having life-threatening symptoms such as anaphylaxis, trouble breathing, severe swelling of the throat preventing breathing, etc. call 9-1-1 immediately.***