



savannah periodontics
PERIODONTICS AND IMPLANT DENTISTRY

Laser Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

In order for surgery areas 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, the diseased layer of gum tissue was removed, the roots were thoroughly cleaned and a blood clot was formed around the teeth. These blood clots form a protective layer or seal around the teeth like a scab and should be left in place as long as possible. They will usually turn white and then disappear after several days. To prevent complications and ensure good results after surgery, please read and follow the instructions below.

Do:

- **Take all of your medications as prescribed:** Antibiotics, a mouth rinse 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.
- **Maintain a soft diet and chew away from the surgery side:** Surgeries are usually done one side at a time to give you an unaffected side to chew on. Regardless, try to maintain a liquid diet for 2-3 days after surgery. After a few days, eat only foods that are soft enough to cut with a fork and chew on the side opposite your surgery. Do not bite into anything if surgery was performed on the front teeth. Avoid sharp foods, seeds or any foods with seeds: Tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries, etc.
- **Contact the office or Dr. O'Neill if your teeth hurt when you close them together:** During the surgery, your bite was adjusted to lighten the contacts with the opposing teeth. If your teeth hurt when they touch together, it could mean that they need further adjustment. Lightening the contacts between the teeth not only keeps you comfortable during the initial healing period, but also reduces tooth mobility.
- **Place gentle pressure on the gum tissue if the surgery site starts to bleed:** Most bleeding complications are caused by not icing or chewing on the side that had surgery. If this occurs, apply very gentle pressure with a finger-tip for approximately 10-15 minutes. If bleeding persists call Dr. O'Neill immediately, especially if you are on blood thinners.
- **Restrict physical activity:** Avoid strenuous activity for at least 24 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 on the surgery side:** This is extremely important!!!
- **DON'T drink through a straw:** This could cause the site to bleed or dislodge the protective blood clot that needs to remain around the teeth. A straw may be used gently after 7 days. If you are drinking cold liquids, some sensitivity is a normal side effect of the surgery and is usually temporary.
- **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 polish the enamel as long as you don't touch the gum tissue or dislodge the blood clot. Begin brushing surgery sites gently after 7 days.
- **DON'T floss:** Avoid flossing until your post-operative appointment, which is usually about 2 weeks from the time of surgery. DO NOT USE A WATERPIK.
- **DON'T be alarmed with any changes in color:** Gum tissues can be gray, red, blue, purple, or "stringy" and reflect a normal response to laser treatments.
- **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

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

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.

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.