



Post-Operative Guide: Periodontal Surgery with or without Regeneration

Section 1: The first 24 hours

What to expect

Pain: The amount of pain you feel after the surgery has a lot to do with the difficulty and size of the surgery performed. The bigger the area involved, the more pain you are likely to feel afterwards. If the pain increases significantly a few days (3 to 7 days) after the surgery, please call for instructions.

Bleeding: You will bleed in the first 24 hours after surgery. This is totally normal. Keep in mind that when blood mixes with saliva it may appear as if you are bleeding more than you are. Don't sweat it if you're still bleeding a little bit when you go to bed, just put a towel over your pillow and get some shut eye.

Swelling: You are probably going to experience some degree of swelling after surgery. The amount of swelling you have will depend on the difficulty and size of the surgery performed. The swelling is usually greatest in the first 4 days and should start to decrease by 7 to 10 days. If the swelling increases significantly a few days (3 to 7 days) after the surgery please call for instructions.

Sutures: If sutures were placed directly after surgery, you might feel them with your tongue. Do your best to leave the little guys alone. Messing with them is ultimately going to screw with the healing of the site. The time it takes your sutures to dissolve has everything to do with the type of suture used and how your body reacts to them. The sutures may start to come out anywhere from two days to two weeks after surgery. If non-dissolving sutures were used, our office will need to remove them anywhere from two to six weeks after the day of your surgery.

Strict No-Can-Do's

- (1) Do not rinse with anything for the first day after surgery.
- (2) Do not spit, suck through a straw, or touch the surgical site (don't even pull your cheek or lip to look at it!) for the first 7 days after surgery.
- (3) Do not rub or apply excess pressure to your face to massage the area if bone grafting was done. The bone needs to heal without ANY outside pressure for 3 months.
- (4) Do not smoke or drink alcohol for the first 3 days after surgery.
- (5) Do not exercise, mow the lawn, vacuum the house, shovel snow, or play sports for the first 5 days after surgery. These activities tend to increase the risk of bleeding. For the first 24 hours, you should be a couch potato!



- (6) Do not eat or drink hot foods/beverages (warm is ok) for the first 7 days after surgery.
- (7) Do not consume spicy foods, chips, popcorn, carbonated drinks, or acidic juices (Orange, Grapefruit, etc.) for the 14 days after surgery.

Things you should do

Pressure: If gauze packs were placed by one of our staff members, you should continue to keep the pads in place. Do not change them for the first hour, after which they can gently be removed. If active bleeding persists, place enough new gauze to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 30 to 45 minutes). It is best to moisten the gauze with tap water and loosely fluff for more comfortable positioning.

Cold Packs: As you leave the office and when you arrive home, use a cold pack on your face next to the extraction site to keep down the swelling. Keep the cold pack on for 20 minutes, then off for 20 minutes. You can repeat this cycle for the first 36 hours.

Medications: Take all the medication given or prescribed as directed. You may have started some of them just before the surgery. Take all the medications with food unless otherwise stated.

Oral Hygiene: Do not rinse your mouth for the first 24 hours. Starting the day AFTER surgery, you may start to brush and floss your teeth. Be extremely careful around the area where surgery was performed. If you are uncomfortable brushing the surgical site then just don't do it! The area will be just fine for the next 2 weeks. Do NOT use the Water-pik or water-flossing devices, they are traumatic to the healing process. Rinsing with the prescription mouthwash, Listerine or warm salt water will help to clean the treated area. To make the salt water rinse; mix one teaspoon of salt with half a glass of warm (NOT hot) water. CAUTION: do NOT rinse vigorously. Instead, place the mouthwash in your mouth and gently rock your head from side to side, bathing the surgical site in the mouth rinse.

Diet: Most patients find it difficult to sit down and eat a normal meal after dental surgery. It's not difficult to see why - chewing, chomping, smacking and sucking can aggravate the treated area resulting in pain. It could also re-open the surgical site which could result in an infection and serious healing complications. We suggest you eat soft foods, take smaller bites and chew only in the areas where there is no dressing or sutures. Avoid highly seasoned foods and sharp foods such as nuts, popcorn and chips. It's important to maintain a nutritious diet while you heal. The patient who maintains a healthy diet of soft foods generally feels better, has less discomfort and heals faster.

Diet Suggestions for the first 24 hours:

**(All food must be consumed at a cool or cold temperature. Nothing warm in the 1st 24hrs!)*



Beverages:

- Fruit smoothies, Protein shakes, Iced tea, Milk, Milk shakes (no straws!), Nutritional Supplement drink (e.g. boost, muscle milk, ensure), Water

Main Courses:

- Cold pasta, Cold Soup, Cold Mashed Potatoes

Desserts:

- Applesauce, Cold pudding, Jell-O, Mousse, Yogurt

Section 2: Days 2-14

What to expect

Pain: Quite often the second day is as bad if not worse than the first. Hang in there, you're going to get through this. Again, the amount of pain is directly associated with the difficulty of the surgery and the number of teeth involved. Pain usually is the worst for the first 3 days and should be gone by 10 to 14 days. If the pain and/or swelling increase significantly a few days (3 to 7 days) after the extraction, please call for instructions.

Bleeding: You may still have a little bit of bleed from the surgical site. This should mainly be in the form of oozing and the appearance should be pink from mixture with your saliva. If you still have heavy bleeding by the end of day 2 give the office a call. Minor bleeding may be evident for the first few days - it will be evident just after you rinse.

Swelling: You may experience additional swelling from what you saw in the first 24 hours. The swelling may continue to get worse the second day. This should level off on day 3 and slowly begin to decrease by day 4 or 5. Again, the amount of swelling will be directly associated with the difficulty of the surgery and the number of teeth involved. The swelling is usually greatest in the first 4 days and should start to decrease by 7 to 10 days. If the swelling increases significantly a few days (3 to 7 days) after surgery, please call for instructions.

Bruising: The development of a black, blue-green or yellow discoloration is the result of blood spreading under the tissues. It's quite normal for a bruise to form in the first 2-3 days after surgery. The size and length of time you have the bruise will be directly related to the size and complexity of the procedure. Most bruises go away in 7 days; however, some may persist for up to 14 days after surgery.

Things you should do

Warm Packs: After the first 24 to 36 hours the cold packs can be switched to warm packs, although this is not required. Gentle pressure is all you need. Make sure it's not hot!

Diet: Your diet after the first 24 hours will be a little different from the first 24 hours. The rule of thumb is as follows: If you can pinch through it easily, you're allowed to eat it! We suggest



you continue eat these soft foods, take smaller bites and chew only in the areas where there is no dressing or sutures

Diet Suggestions for Days 2-14:

**(In addition to the list for the first 24hrs, you can also enjoy the following suggestions. Any of your options for day 2-14 can be consumed either warm or cold – NEVER HOT!)*

Beverages:

- Apple Cider, Coffee, Tea – Green, Black, or Herbal

Breakfast:

- Scrambled eggs, Omelets, Oatmeal, French Toast, Pancakes, Waffles, Soft Cereals

Lunch and Dinner:

- Soups, Pasta, Fish fillets (steamed or baked), Frittata, Stews, Crock-pot meals, Slow cooked meats, Slow cooked veggies, Mac and Cheese, Meatloaf

Section 3: Day 15 and on

What to expect

Pain and Swelling: You should no longer be experiencing major pain into the third week of healing. If you feel an increase in pain or swelling please give the office a call to discuss your symptoms.

Sutures: If resorbable sutures were used they will probably be dissolved by now. If non-resorbable sutures were used they will likely be removed at your two-week post-operative appointment (Sometimes we leave them in longer). If you feel a suture might still be present after the sutures were supposed to be removed, please call the office to have it evaluated.

Sensitivity: Expect to have some pretty serious sensitivity after periodontal surgery. The goal is to reduce the pocket depths, therefore gum tissue and sometimes bone are removed in order to achieve shallower pockets. This will result in exposure of root surfaces that were previously covered. This sensitivity will continue to improve with time.

Things to avoid

Continue to avoid using the water-pik close to the surgical site for the first month after surgery. Continue to avoid rubbing or applying excess pressure to your face to massage the area if bone grafting was done. The bone needs to heal without ANY outside pressure for 3 months.



Things you should do

By the second week you should be feeling close to your old self (hopefully better!). Discontinue using the prescription oral rinse. Continue to take caution brushing and flossing around the surgical site, but don't be afraid to make sure things are clean back there!

Diet

If your surgery was performed without bone grafting or placement of regenerative materials you are free to eat anything you want! However, it's always a good idea to continue to take smaller bites and chew only on the opposite side of where your surgery performed. If surgery was performed on both sides, make sure to continue following the soft food diet recommendations listed for Days 2-14 after surgery. Continue this diet until your 3 to 4-month healing evaluation appointment with our office.

Section 4: What's Next?

Two Month Re-evaluation:

Approximately 2 months after your periodontal surgery, you will need to have your teeth evaluated at our office. At this appointment, you will have your teeth thoroughly cleaned and your gums re-evaluated. We want to make sure the pocket depth reduction was successful.

Six Month Re-Evaluation:

If bone grafting or regeneration was performed, these specific teeth must remain undisturbed for at least six months. It takes time for the bone around the teeth to mature. We will send a letter to your referring dentist explaining where the grafting was performed and specific instructions on when it is appropriate to re-probe the gingival tissues.

Periodontal Maintenance

It's important for you to understand that periodontal surgery is just the beginning. Unfortunately, periodontal surgery cannot be cured, only slowed down. Therefore, once the surgery is complete it's your job to make sure you maintain the results we achieved. The best way to do this is through excellent oral hygiene and diligent routine periodontal maintenance appointments at our office. These appointments will be scheduled every three months for at least the first year after your surgery.

Oral Hygiene

The following is a list of things you can do to reduce the risk of your periodontal disease returning:



- (1) Brush your teeth twice per day for two minutes at a time. Make sure you are not just brushing the crown on top of the teeth – brush the gum line. Remember, the bacteria that infect your teeth will sneak into the gaps between your teeth and your gums. If they get too deep you will no longer be able to reach to them to clean them out and you will be right back where you started before the surgery!
- (2) Floss your teeth once per day. A mouth rinse can also be used once per day.
- (3) See your dentist or periodontist every 3 months for routine periodontal maintenance cleaning appointments to ensure the subgingival bacteria are getting removed in the deeper pockets of your mouth.

Eliminating Risk Factors

You've just made a financial investment towards saving your teeth. Therefore, you probably want to protect your investment by reducing or eliminating anything that might put your teeth in jeopardy. The following is a list of risk factors that have been shown to be associated with increases risk of tooth loss and worsening of periodontal disease:

- (1) Smoking (this includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, marijuana, and vaporizers)
- (2) Poorly controlled Diabetes (this includes both type I and type II Diabetes)
- (3) Cardiovascular Diseases (this includes High Blood Pressure, Stroke, Aneurysm, Atherosclerosis, Heart Valve Disease, and Acute Coronary Syndrome)

In the case of an emergency you can reach either Dr. John Thousand or Dr. Bob Thousand on their cell phones:

Dr. John Thousand Cell: 303-250-4091

Dr. Bob Thousand Cell: 904-669-9661