

Care of Mouth Following Dental Implant Surgery

▶ **Bleeding** – Some minor bleeding is expected after dental implant surgery. It will usually subside quickly and stop within an hour or two after surgery. A little oozing is normal and may persist for several hours. If used, the sutures are usually dissolvable and will fall out on their own within 5-10 days. Keep firm biting pressure on the gauze over the surgery site for about one hour. Remove the gauze and check the site for bleeding. If significant bleeding continues, new gauze should be placed and firm pressure applied for one hour. Repeat as necessary. A tea bag can be used if you do not have gauze. Avoid vigorous chewing, spitting, rinsing or sucking through a straw for 24 hours. Avoid continually pulling at your lip to check the operative site. Allowing the tissues to rest undisturbed assists the healing process. You may wish to place a towel on your pillowcase to avoid staining from any blood-tainted saliva.

▶ **Swelling** – You may or may not experience swelling. Swelling may be at a maximum about 2 or 3 days after surgery. Keeping your head elevated (in a recliner or on several pillows) will reduce swelling. Place an ice pack to the face over the operated area for 20 minutes or every half hour, while awake, for the first day (this is the best way to reduce swelling).

▶ **Oral Hygiene** – It is recommended that you begin gently rinsing or soaking the mouth with warm water (avoid vigorous swishing) starting the day of surgery. This should be done after meals and at bedtime. You can begin brushing the unaffected teeth the day after surgery. If prescribed, a chlorhexidine rinse should be used twice daily. While oral cleanliness is essential to proper healing, the *implant* should be left alone for the first two weeks following surgery.

▶ **Diet** – The day of your surgery, start with nourishing liquids and soft/colder foods. Avoid hot foods for 24 hours. Avoid foods with sharp edges (chips, pretzels, etc.) and do not chew immediately over the implant area. You may want to limit foods to softer items and chew in an area away from the implant during the 10 to 12 week integration stage. Avoid carbonated and alcoholic beverages for 24 hours and do not use a straw for at least 24 hours. You must take at least two glasses of liquid with pain medication. Gradually return to your normal diet as tolerated but avoid chewing directly over the implant.

▶ **Pain** – Initially, you may have some discomfort. Tylenol or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin or Aleve) may be used for pain. The pain will gradually diminish. If medications were prescribed, take as directed with two full glasses of liquid. Do not take pain medication on an empty stomach.

▶ **Physical Activity** – Avoid strenuous physical activity for 24-48 hours following surgery. Strenuous activity will increase your blood pressure and disrupt clot formation.

▶ **Smoking** – It is advisable that you refrain from smoking for at least 3 days after surgery, as this increases the risk of infection and may delay healing. 7-14 days is recommended for optimal healing.

▶ **Follow-up Visit** – Return to the office as requested for suture removal and/or examination. Contact our office if you have any questions or problems before that time. Please inform us if you cannot keep your appointment so that we can reschedule at your earliest convenience.

**Please call Dr. Barker directly if you have any concerns after office hours:
443-343-2314 Leave name, phone number and a brief message**