

CAIRNS ORAL SURGERY

Dr. Brian Finn B.D.S., M.D.S., M.B.B.S., F.R.A.C.D.S. (OMS)

DENTAL IMPLANTS INFORMATION

Implants often provide the best solution to replacing missing, damaged and extracted teeth from the point of view of appearance, function and longevity.

This procedure requires that implants are inserted into the jaw bones to facilitate the construction of teeth and dental prostheses, which is done through the insertion of small titanium fixtures into the living bone. Excellent oral hygiene and plaque control is very important to the success of implants. Poor plaque control can lead to soft tissue and implant problems, which have been shown to be responsible for, implant failure and loss. You will be required to attend multiple pre and postoperative appointments. This is to ensure the highest level of care and the best possible outcome.

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Post Implant Surgery:

1. HYGIENE/CARE OF WOUNDS

It is ESSENTIAL to maintain a high standard of oral hygiene following implant surgery using a combination of salt water rinses and regular toothbrushing. You should commence your rinses and toothbrushing the day AFTER surgery and you should aim to rinse every two (2) hours for the initial 48 hours the preceding to after meals and before bed until the area has healed completely. Gentle toothbrushing around the wounds may cause a small amount of bleeding, but it is important to remove food debris and plaque from the area of the wounds. If food and plaque are allowed to accumulate around the wounds there is a very real chance of the implants becoming infected or lost. If you are able to see the silver healing abutment of the implant this should also be brushed lightly and kept shiny.

2. DRESSINGS.

Generally dressings are not used with implant surgery however you will be supplied with mouth packs to assist with possible post-operative bleeding.

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3. SWELLING AND BRUISING.

Swelling and bruising are not uncommon following implant surgery. Generally swelling takes up to three days to reach its maximum then this will slowly subside over about ten days.

Bruising is variable and may range from some minor patches of bruising around the face through to quite extensive bruising which may extend up to the orbits and down the chin into the neck. The bruises slowly discolour with time and may take 10-14 days to disappear. Ice packs should be applied regularly to the face over the first 48 hours. The hospital will normally supply you with several packs to take home.

4. NUMBNESS.

When you recover from your surgery you may notice parts of your face are quite numb. You are given local anaesthetic injections at the time of your surgery and this is done deliberately as a pain control measure. The numbness generally takes 6-8 hours to wear off and during this time you should avoid contact with hot liquids etc.

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On occasions some of the sensory nerves in the jaw bones can be disturbed by the surgical procedure and this may cause some prolonged numbness lasting a few weeks, or in severe cases some months. On very rare occasions there may be some permanently altered sensation in and around the jaws.

5. BLEEDING.

From time to time bleeding and oozing may occur from a recently operated implant site. This can be controlled by the use of pressure packs which will be supplied by the ward. These should be placed over the wounds and pressure applied by biting down firmly on the packs. YOU SHOULD REST QUIETLY WITH YOUR HEAD ELEVATED. The hospital will supply you with some spare pressure packs to take home and if the bleeding or oozing does not stop within 30 minutes please contact the hospital in which you were treated.

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6. DIET.

Your diet will be restricted to soft foods (e.g. eggs, pasta, rice, soup) for up to 5 days, where little chewing is required, until the swelling and discomfort subsides. If weight loss is a problem or you can only tolerate fluids, then consider milk fortified with eggs, skim milk powder as well as Sustagen from your local pharmacy.

7. SMOKING.

Patients undergoing any form of implant surgery **MUST NOT SMOKE AT ALL**. Smoking is known to significantly reduce the chances of successful implant surgery. Generally patients will not be treated for implant surgery unless they have given up smoking for at least 3 months prior to surgery. Long-term, once the implants have healed, smoking is still considered a significant disadvantage and there is an increased risk of long-term fixture loss.

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8. SPECIAL ASPECTS.

You MUST NOT WEAR YOUR DENTURES OR ANY OTHER FORM OF INTRAORAL PROSTHESIS for at least ten days following surgery. If you wear your dentures or prostheses too early there is a very real chance of causing wound breakdown and infection and/or loss of the implant.

9. POST-OPERATIVE MEDICATIONS AND SUPPLIES ETC.

You will be provided with the following on discharge:

a) A course of antibiotics.

You will have been given intravenous antibiotics in the operating theatre and sometimes on the ward post-operatively. A prescription for your oral antibiotics will be available for you to take home or alternatively the ward may have the prescription filled for you before discharge. IT IS ESSENTIAL YOU COMPLETE ALL OF THE ANTIBIOTICS as indicated on the label.

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b) Analgesics.

These are also prescribed and the prescription will be available for you to take home or, as with the antibiotics, the ward may have the prescription filled for you before discharge. Generally “middle of the range” analgesics are satisfactory for pain control following minor oral surgery.

10. PROBLEMS.

After carefully reading the above information, please CALL THE PRACTICE if ;

- You experience excessive discomfort that you cannot control by your tablets.
- You have bleeding that you cannot control by biting on gauze.
- You have increasing swelling after the third day following surgery.
- You have a temperature greater than 38 degrees (use a thermometer).

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11. FOLLOW-UP CARE.

It is necessary to be reviewed after surgery. You are advised to pre-book a review appointment within a two to three week period after your surgery date. To ensure the highest level of health care and the best possible outcome it is important to keep this appointment.

12. EMERGENCIES

If you have any concerns following your surgery please do not hesitate to contact our rooms 07 4051 3838. If for some reason this is not possible, there is a 24 hour emergency department at the Cairns Base Hospital 07 4226 0000.