Dental implant aftercare

Looking after your mouth after implant placement. Follow the personal instructions we give you, especially if you have also had bone or gum grafting, sinus treatment or sedation.

First 24 hours - protect the healing area

Rest and avoid exercise, heavy lifting and bending down. **Do not rinse, spit forcefully or touch the wound** with your tongue or fingers. **Do not pull your lip or cheek back to look at the wound.** Do not test the implant or temporary tooth.

While numb, avoid hot food and drinks and take care not to bite your lip, cheek or tongue. Wait until numbness wears off before chewing. Choose soft, cool or lukewarm food.

From the next day - use the supplied mouthwash

Use the supplied **mouthwash twice daily for 7-14 days**, unless we give you different instructions. Start the day after treatment.

Measure the amount stated on the bottle. **Do not dilute it.** Gently hold it over the area for about **one minute**, then let it out gently. **Do not swish vigorously, spit forcefully or swallow it.**

Use it at a different time from toothbrushing. Avoid eating, drinking or rinsing with water for **30 minutes afterwards.**

Brushing and stitches

Brush the rest of your teeth normally. **Initially avoid brushing directly over the implant wound or stitches. After your review appointment, once we confirm the area is ready, start gentle cleaning with a very soft toothbrush.** This is usually around 1-2 weeks after treatment, but grafted areas may need longer. Avoid floss, interdental brushes or a water flosser at the surgical site until advised.

Attend any review arranged to check healing and remove stitches if needed. Do not pull at stitches. If you are unsure when to restart cleaning the area, please contact us.

Food, dentures and daily activities

Choose soft foods for the first week and **avoid chewing on the implant site or temporary tooth** unless we say it is safe. Do not wear a denture that presses on the area until we have checked it. Follow any longer restrictions given for your treatment.

Avoid smoking and vaping throughout healing; stopping long term is best for implant health. Avoid alcohol for at least 24 hours and longer if advised or required by your medicines. If you had sedation or sinus treatment, follow your separate instructions too.

Recovery, pain relief and help

What to expect

Some soreness, bruising, swelling and blood-stained saliva are common. Swelling is often greatest on days 2-3, then should begin to settle. A cold pack wrapped in a cloth, used for 10 minutes at a time during the first few hours, may help. Never put ice directly on your skin.

If bleeding starts

Sit upright. Place lightly dampened gauze or a clean folded cotton cloth over the bleeding area and apply **steady pressure for 30 minutes without checking**. Do not rinse. If bleeding continues, contact us promptly; seek help sooner if you take blood thinners. Heavy bleeding that will not stop needs emergency help.

Pain relief

Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be taken together if both are safe for you. Follow the packet and our personal advice. Use the lowest effective dose for the shortest time and do not exceed either daily limit.

Check with your dentist or pharmacist before ibuprofen if you take blood thinners, have stomach ulcers, kidney or heart problems, asthma, are pregnant, or have reacted to anti-inflammatory medicines. Do not combine it with other anti-inflammatory painkillers.

Do not combine medicines containing paracetamol. Ask for advice if you weigh under 50 kg, have liver or kidney problems or regularly drink heavily. If you take too much paracetamol, contact NHS 111 even if you feel well.

Do not take aspirin for pain relief. Keep taking prescribed aspirin or other blood-thinning medicines unless your prescribing clinician advises otherwise. Take any prescribed antibiotics as directed; contact us if you have a reaction or cannot take them.

Please contact us promptly

Call for worsening or uncontrolled pain, swelling that increases after day 3, fever, pus, a persistent bad taste, wound opening, ongoing bleeding, or a loose implant, healing cap or temporary tooth. Report numbness or altered sensation that lasts beyond the expected anaesthetic period. **Do not wait for your next appointment.**

Who to call

During opening hours, always call reception first: 01872 241955. The team will arrange help with your treating clinician. For urgent concerns, call rather than waiting for an email reply.

Weekends only - private on-call service: call **01872 241955** and follow the recorded instructions to contact the on-call dentist.

At other times when the practice is closed, or if you cannot reach the weekend on-call dentist, call **NHS 111** for urgent advice. For urgent dental care in Cornwall, you can also call **Smile Together: 0333 405 0290**.

Serious complications are uncommon. However, **call 999 or go to A&E** if you have difficulty breathing or swallowing, heavy bleeding that will not stop, or rapidly spreading swelling of your face or neck.