

# Dr. Jason Cataldo, D.D.S., M.S.D.

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Diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology

## Periodontics & Dental Implants

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### DENTAL IMPLANT SURGERY POST- SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. DISCOMFORT AND MEDICATIONS:** Dental Implant Surgery, like other surgical procedures, may be associated with varying degrees of discomfort. All medications should be taken strictly as prescribed. If analgesics have been prescribed, it is usually best to take the first dose while the surgical site is still anesthetized (“numb”). The interval between taking the medications and the total length of time that you are to remain on your medications has been carefully determined to give you the maximum benefit with the minimum use of drugs. Variation from the prescribed regimen can affect healing and the success of your procedure.
- 2. BLEEDING:** You may notice slight bleeding from the surgical site. This type of minor bleeding for one or two days is not unusual and is not a major concern. If at any time you notice the formation of large blood clots or an obvious flow of blood, which is more than a slight ooze, notify Dr. Cataldo at once.
- 3. SWELLING:** Some slight swelling of the operated area is not unusual and may begin after surgery. An ice pack may be used to minimize swelling. Ice should be placed in a plastic bag and then wrapped in a thin cloth towel and applied directly over the surgical area. You should maintain the towel wrapped ice pack in contact with the skin as much as possible for the first 24 hours after surgery. You should also keep your head elevated above the level of your heart during the first 24 hours after surgery. This may necessitate the use of several pillows to support your head and upper body while sleeping.  
If swelling occurs, it usually disappears after several days. Applying moist heat to the swollen area will help the swelling resolve, however, **heat should not be applied until at least 1-2 days after surgery.** Any unusual or large swelling should be reported to Dr. Cataldo at once.
- 4. SUTURES:** Sutures (“stitches”) are placed to hold the gingival tissues in the proper position for ideal healing. If sutures (“stitches”) were placed, your doctor will usually want you to return so that they can be fully removed once sufficient healing has occurred. **Do not disturb the sutures with your tongue, toothbrush or in any other manner since displacement will impair healing.** If you notice that a suture has come out or come loose, notify Dr. Cataldo during regular office hours.
- 5. RINSING:** Avoid vigorous rinsing for the first 24 hours following surgery. You will most likely be prescribed a Chlorhexidine rinse such as Peridex or Periogard, which should be

used morning and night for up to two weeks. In addition, cold water held in the mouth during the first 12 – 14 hours may help reduce slight bleeding.

- 6. DIET:** For your comfort and to protect the surgical area, we recommend a soft diet. Avoid chewing in the area of surgery. Avoid hard, granular, fibrous, or “sharp” foods (such as corn chips) as these may be uncomfortable and can dislodge the periodontal dressing.

**Drink plenty of liquids.**

It is important to maintain a diet with a normal calorie level that is high in protein, minerals, and vitamins to support post-operative healing. Eat as normal a diet as possible.

**POST SURGICALLY IS NOT THE TIME TO START A DIET**, since this can have detrimental effects on healing and lessen the chances of success of the surgical therapy.

- 7. ORAL HYGIENE:** The surgical area should not be disturbed for the first week post-operatively. Continue to brush and floss the teeth, which were not involved in the surgery (or covered by the periodontal dressing). You may rinse gently with salt water or with a mouthwash if prescribed. After the sutures have been removed, generally after 1 week, you should lightly clean the teeth using a soft toothbrush or as instructed by your doctor. The gentle application of a fluoride gel with your toothbrush will also help to control plaque.
- 8. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** Avoid strenuous physical activity during your immediate recovery period, usually 2 to 3 days.
- 9. SMOKING:** All smoking should be stopped until after your sutures have been removed to ensure the best healing and success of your surgical procedure. Healing results are significantly worse in smokers than in non-smokers.
- 10. ALCOHOL:** Intake of alcohol should be minimized until after your sutures have been removed and for the next several weeks after removal to enhance healing. The combination of alcohol and certain pain medications is not recommended.
- 11. DO NOT'S:** For the next several days, do NOT spit, smoke, rinse hard, drink through a straw, create a “sucking” action in your mouth, use an over the counter commercial mouthwash, drink carbonated soda, or use an oral irrigating device.

**12. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

If you have any questions or problems, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Cataldo. If you are not feeling significantly better after 4 days, or you notice swelling beginning to develop, you may contact Dr. Cataldo anytime via cell phone at (919) 943-9815.