



After Your Periodontal Surgery

Immediately after surgery

Your lips, teeth and tongue may be numb for several hours.

- Avoid chewing until the numbness has completely worn off.
- Don't eat anything for 2 hours.

For the first 24 hours

Relax as much as possible and avoid all strenuous activities.

Pain/Swelling

Discomfort and swelling are normal for a few days after surgery.

- Take pain medication as recommended.
- Take pain medication with food. If you take pain medication on an empty stomach, you may have nausea.
- Apply an ice pack (20 minutes on; 20 minutes off) for 6 hours after surgery.
- After 24 hours, to further reduce pain and swelling, rinse your mouth three times a day with warm salt water (put a teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water; gently rinse-swish-spit).
- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them for as long as your doctor specified, even if you have no signs and symptoms of infection.

Bleeding

Some slight bleeding is normal for a day or two after surgery.

If bleeding lasts longer:

- Press firmly with a moist gauze pad, or bite on a tea bag for 20 minutes.
- Raise your head with pillows.
- Call the NIH Page Operator at (301)-496-1211 and ask for the ON CALL dentist.

Eating

For the first 48 hours:

- Eat only soft foods such as yogurt, ice cream, cottage cheese, and soups until you can chew comfortably.
- Avoid hot (temperature) foods. They can cause bleeding.
- Do not use a straw.
- Avoid heavy lifting and bending.

Mouth care

- Do not brush the area(s) where you had surgery for 1 week.
- Continue routine care in untreated areas.
- You may gently rinse around the treated area with warm water or mouthwash, but avoid frequent or vigorous rinsing until the area heals.

Call us if pain, bleeding, or swelling persists or if you have any questions or concerns.

**Questions? Call the dental clinic: (301) 496-4371 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
In emergencies, call the NIH Operator (301) 496-1211 and ask for the ON CALL DENTIST.**



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This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the NIH Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about this information, talk to a member of your health care team.

Questions about the Clinical Center?
OCCC@cc.nih.gov

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National Institutes of Health
NIH Clinical Center
Bethesda, Maryland 20892