

## Common Questions for Assistants

### **“Why are implants so expensive?”**

“Implants may seem expensive, but did you know that implants are actually one of the least expensive means of replacing teeth? That’s because other solutions like bridges and dentures have to be revisited and replaced multiple times. And they can bring about other problems, like damage to surrounding bone, teeth, and gums, which then requires more treatment. Because implants are a permanent, guaranteed solution that isolates the affected area, you save in so many ways. For this reason, I highly recommend using implants for tooth replacement when cost is a concern for the patient.”

### **“When can I schedule the procedure?”**

“We can get you scheduled now! I’m going to have \_\_\_\_\_ (staff member name) work with you to get an appointment set up right away.”

It’s best to have a treatment coordinator/financial coordinator schedule the appointment right then and there.

### **“What is the difference between DDS and DMD?”**

DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) and DMD (Doctor of Dental Medicine) are equivalent degrees. Each dental school awards one of these degrees upon graduation from dental school.

### **“Is there an anesthesiologist?”**

“There is not a separate doctor operating as a dental anesthesiologist at our practice, but that’s because our doctors meet and exceed the certification and licensing requirements to administer dental anesthesia for our patients.”

You can add additional light information about your training, residency, experience, work in hospitals, the approach to anesthesia with your trauma patients, etc., if helpful.

### **“How many of these have you done?”**

“This is actually one of the most common procedures we perform in the office. I’d say we see about \_\_\_\_\_ (number) of these per week. Over the years, that’s *a lot* of procedures.”

**“Where does the bone graft come from?”**

“That varies by diagnosis and procedure. In this case, we’re going to use \_\_\_\_\_ because it will give us the best result. If during the surgery we need to make an adjustment to that plan, we’ll let you know.”

**“How long will this take?”**

“It looks like you’re scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours today. Are you making arrangements for transportation?”

**“Can I watch?”**

“Because this is an outpatient procedure and we need to meet all surgical requirements within the regular dental operator, we will be unable to provide mirrors or video for your procedure today. But I can provide you with a link to some videos of the procedure that we have on our website so that you can see the procedure if you like.”

**“Is this going to hurt?”**

“We use a variety of methods to keep you comfortable during and after the procedure. Most patients tell us they have no pain and little discomfort.”

At this point, discuss any pre-med, local, or IV sedation, GA details, and post-surgical pain medications.

“If at any time you are having difficulty getting or staying comfortable, please let us know so we can inquire further about your situation, and perhaps have you come back in so we can check on your surgical site and healing.”

**“Can I have laughing gas?”**

“Nitrous oxide is available depending on what your treatment entails and what other anesthesia options we consider. We want to ensure you’re comfortable before, throughout, and after the procedure. Let’s talk about what’s recommended for your situation, and you can let me know your preferences so we can tailor a solution to your needs.”

**“How long will I be sore?”**

“That varies from procedure to procedure and patient to patient. Most patients tell us that after this procedure, they experience little, if any, actual pain, and that the soreness is gone within \_\_\_\_\_ days. You can expect some general awareness that you’ve had a procedure, and you’ll want to follow your care instructions to ensure you protect the area and heal properly. But if you have discomfort that extends beyond a reasonable period of time, please contact us. We may want to see you to check on your site and healing and provide any help you may need.”

**“Can I have a refill of pain meds?”**

“You will be provided with a prescription for the pain medication that the doctor recommends for your procedure. But many patients don’t need it or decide not to take all of it because they feel better pretty quickly. You definitely want to keep yourself comfortable, but if you’re still having pain when you get to the end of your pain medication, please give us a call. We’d like to hear more about what’s going on, and we might ask you to come back in to check how things are healing. Of course, if the doctor sees that you have a situation that warrants more pain medication, they’ll take care of that when they see you.”

**“Am I going to get an antibiotic?”**

*(If prescribed)* “The doctor has written a prescription for antibiotics that you will take before/after the procedure. It’s important that you fill the prescription and take all of the antibiotics as directed to avoid infection and ensure fast healing.”

**“What is the recovery like?”**

“We anticipate a pretty straightforward recovery from your procedure. In general, patients have very little pain, manageable short-term discomfort, and they progress very quickly through the healing process.

You should get a ride home and expect to take it easy for the rest of the day. You should avoid all strenuous activity (e.g., working out, heavy lifting, great exertion), and you’ll want to stand up slowly and get plenty of rest.

We’ve provided you with information about pain medication and what to eat. Beyond that, recovery from the surgical process is a matter of seeing how you feel and taking things slowly and accordingly. When it comes to the surgical site itself, I’d like to provide you with these detailed instructions on cleaning, avoiding direct chewing contact, and when to contact us for additional information and assistance.”

**“When can I work out?”**

“We recommend that you wait for \_\_\_\_\_ days after your procedure to resume your workout routine. Even then, begin with light exertion and build up to normal activity from there. And if you feel any dizziness, light headedness, or discomfort, please discontinue your workout, sit down, and cut back your approach to resuming normal activity levels until you can tolerate exertion.”

**“Can I fly after having this done?”**

“It’s not advisable for you to fly the day of surgery or even within \_\_\_\_\_ days afterwards. It’s best to arrange your travel plans around your surgery so that you can get this taken care of and comfortably travel afterwards.

We're going to want to see you for a follow up within \_\_\_\_\_ (duration of time). Let me get \_\_\_\_\_ (staff member name) to work with you so we can compare our schedules and find a good time for that follow up."

### **"Can I take a taxi home or Uber?"**

"It may seem like there's not much difference, but we ask for you to bring a driver for your appointment because it's more than a matter of transportation. People respond to surgery in different ways, and we really do want to enlist the help of someone who can keep an eye on you. A cab driver won't necessarily be helpful with walking you to the car, helping you into your home, or getting you settled with any medications or immediate recovery steps that may be involved. If you're having trouble making arrangements for a driver, please let us know and we're happy to do whatever we can to be of help."

### **"Do I need someone to stay with me after I get home (after general anesthesia)?"**

"It's a very good idea to arrange for a companion for the rest of the day (and night) for patients who choose general anesthesia for their surgery. It's not always necessary, but why not use an abundance of caution and ensure you have someone who can provide any help you need with eating, maintaining your comfort, and facilitating your overall recovery? If you have trouble making these arrangements, please let us know. We may be able to provide suggestions or resources that will be of help to you."

### **"How long do I keep my gauze in?"**

"I'm glad this came up. In general, we recommend that you leave the gauze in for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours after this type of procedure. But everyone responds differently to surgery and everyone heals differently too. If you continue to have \_\_\_\_\_ volume of bleeding or if you continue bleeding after \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time, we'd like to hear from you and possibly have you come back into the office so we can check everything out and provide the help you need. Let's look over the post-surgical instructions together and make sure we cover everything."

### **"What foods can I eat?"**

"In general, we recommend a liquid diet for \_\_\_\_\_ hours/days and a soft diet (like mashed potatoes, oatmeal, etc.) for \_\_\_\_\_ days after surgery. Even then, the focus is on keeping the surgical area clean and protected, so avoid chewing directly with that area. If you still experience pain or have any difficulty eating more substantial foods after \_\_\_\_\_ days, please contact us and we may want to have you come in for a check."

### **"Do the stitches need to be removed?"**

"Yes, we will remove the sutures for you. Before you leave, we'll make an appointment for \_\_\_\_\_ (duration of time) from now. That will give us a chance to remove the sutures and check your healing progress."

It's important that you avoid chewing directly in this area while you have sutures. And while it is important to keep the area as clean as possible, please don't use a toothpick to pull at the sutures. It's better to brush very lightly or very gently use a waterpik for careful cleaning."

**"It's been 3 days and every time I remove the gauze, I'm still bleeding."**

"People respond to surgery in a variety of ways. The vast majority of our patients feel like they're able to return to normal activity after 3 days while some people do need a little more time. If you're having slight bleeding after 3 days, it may be manageable even with a normal activity routine. But if you're still having bleeding after 3 days that prevents you from working or otherwise continuing with your daily activities, we'd like to have you come into the office to ensure you're healing properly."