

Post-Operative Instructions for Dental Laser Therapy (Soft Tissue)

Laser procedures often result in little discomfort and faster healing than traditional surgery, but protecting the surgical area is still vital.

1. Protecting the Fibrin Clot (The "Gum Band-Aid")

The most critical step is to leave the treated area undisturbed to allow the protective blood clot to mature and stabilize the tissue.

- **DO NOT** create a suction or vacuum in your mouth:
 - **Avoid Smoking for a minimum of 72 hours**, preferably longer, as this severely impairs healing.
 - **Do not Spit Forcefully**: allow liquids to fall out of your mouth passively.
 - **Avoid Using a Straw at least 7 days** as the suction can dislodge the clot.
- **AVOID Disturbing the Area**: Do not chew, poke, or apply excessive pressure with your tongue or cheek to the treated site.

2. Diet Guidelines

The goal is to eat soft, nutritious food that minimizes chewing, especially in the treated area.

Timeframe	Diet Recommendation	Foods to AVOID
First 24–72 Hours	Liquid/Soft-Mushy Diet ONLY	Crunchy, Hard, Chewy, or Sticky Foods: Chips, nuts, popcorn, gum, candy.
	Recommended Foods: Broths, smoothies (no straw), milkshakes, yogurt (no seeds), mashed potatoes, pudding.	Hot, Spicy, Acidic Foods/Drinks: Hot coffee/tea, carbonated drinks, alcohol, very spicy foods, citrus juices (can irritate the fresh wound).
After 72 Hours	Soft-Chew Foods	Continue to avoid all foods that could get lodged under the gums (seeds, rice, small grains). Avoid all hard/crunchy foods for at least one month.
	Recommended Foods: Pasta, cottage cheese, steamed soft vegetables.	Chew primarily on the opposite side of your mouth.

3. Oral Hygiene and Rinsing

Strict, gentle hygiene is key to preventing infection without dislodging the healing tissue.

- **First 7–10 Days (or as directed):**
 - **Treated Area: DO NOT brush or floss the treated gum line.** Only brush the chewing surfaces of the treated teeth gently.
 - **Untreated Areas:** Brush and floss all other teeth as normal.
 - **Rinsing:** Use the **prescribed antibacterial mouth rinse** (if given) twice a day. In between, you may gently rinse with **warm salt water** (1/2 teaspoon of salt in ½ glass of warm water) 3-4 times a day.
- **Electric Toothbrushes/Water Flossers: DO NOT USE** in the treated area for **at least 1 month**, or as directed by your dentist.

4. Managing Discomfort and Swelling

Laser procedures typically cause little pain, but you may experience mild soreness or sensitivity.

- **Pain:** Take over-the-counter medication (like Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen) as directed. Your dentist may prescribe pain relief if necessary.
- **Bleeding:** Post-op bleeding is rare. If light oozing occurs, apply gentle pressure with a piece of gauze or a moist tea bag for 10 minutes.
- **Swelling:** Swelling is usually minimal. You can apply a cold compress to the outside of your cheek for **20 minutes on, 20 minutes off** during the first 24 hours to minimize it.
- **Tissue Appearance: Do not be alarmed** by color changes in the gum tissue (it may appear gray, yellow, red, or "stringy"). This is a normal part of the healing process.
- **Sensitivity:** Temporary sensitivity to cold, heat, or touch is normal as the gums heal and regenerate. This will decrease over time.

5. Activity and Medications

- **Rest:** Reduce physical activity and strenuous exercise for **at least 24–48 hours** to keep blood pressure low.
- **Medications:** If antibiotics or other medications were prescribed, **take them exactly as directed** until the course is finished.
- **Elevation:** Keep your head slightly elevated when sleeping or lying down.

When to Call Us

Please contact the office immediately if you experience:

- **Prolonged or Severe Pain** that is not controlled by medication.
- **Excessive or Prolonged Bleeding.**
- **Fever** or a persistent, elevated temperature.
- **Swelling** that continues to increase after 48 hours.

