

All-on-X / Full-Arch Implant: Recovery & Care Guide

What to expect after surgery and while wearing your temporary teeth (follow your surgeon and restoring dentist's instructions).

The big goals (first 3–4 months)

- Protect the implants while they integrate with the bone (this is the critical healing phase).
- Maintain a soft diet even if the teeth look “real” — they are not ready for heavy biting yet.
- Keep the mouth clean and reduce swelling/inflammation.
- Coordinate closely with your restoring dentist for occlusion (bite) checks and adjustments.

What to expect

- Swelling and bruising are common for several days. Swelling often peaks around days 2–3 and then improves.
- Tenderness around the implant sites and gums is expected. Your temporary bridge may feel “tight” as swelling changes.
- Small bite changes can happen as swelling resolves and tissues settle — this is exactly why occlusal follow-ups matter.
- Mild bleeding/oozing in the first 24 hours can occur.
- If you had sinus or bone grafting, your surgeon may give additional precautions.

Soft diet rules (this is the most important section)

- Even if your temporary teeth look like natural teeth (not dentures), they are NOT designed for heavy biting during healing.
- Do not bite into food with your front teeth (no sandwiches, pizza, burgers, apples). Cut everything into small pieces.
- Chew gently and evenly. Avoid “single-side chewing” that overloads one implant area.
- Stay on a soft diet until you are cleared — many patients remain on a soft diet for the entire integration period.
- Pain improvement does NOT mean the implants are fully healed. Bone integration takes time.

Soft diet ideas (easy wins)

- Protein shakes, smoothies (no straw early if advised), yogurt, pudding, applesauce.
- Eggs (scrambled/soft), tofu, soft fish.

General education only. Your care plan may differ based on your anatomy and procedure

- Mashed potatoes/sweet potatoes, oatmeal, grits, polenta.
- Well-cooked pasta with smooth sauce; mac & cheese (soft noodles).
- Soups (blended), soft stews, chili blended to a smooth texture.
- Soft rice/risotto (well cooked) if it doesn't lodge under the bridge.

Avoid these during healing

- Hard/crunchy foods: nuts, chips, popcorn, crusty bread, hard candy.
- Chewy foods: steak, jerky, bagels, gummy candy, tough chicken.
- Sticky foods: caramels, taffy, gum.
- Biting with the front teeth: corn on the cob, apples, big sandwiches, pizza crust.
- Smoking/vaping/nicotine (significantly increases implant and infection risks).

Oral hygiene and cleaning under the bridge

- Brush as directed with a soft brush. Clean around the gums gently—do not “scrub” the surgical sites early.
- You may be instructed to use salt-water rinses or a prescription rinse. Follow the exact timing/directions provided.
- Food can collect under a temporary bridge. Use the cleaning tools your team recommends (often a water flosser on LOW, a soft irrigating syringe, or specialized floss/threaders).
- If you are unsure how to clean under the bridge, call us — cleaning technique prevents inflammation and bad taste/odor.

Follow-up with your restoring dentist (occlusion matters)

- Your bite may need adjustments as swelling changes and tissues settle. This is normal and expected.
- See your restoring dentist promptly for occlusal adjustments if you notice: one side hitting first, new clicking, soreness when you close, or a “high spot.”
- Do not ignore bite problems — an unbalanced bite can overload implants and the temporary bridge.

Timeline to the final teeth (typical planning)

- Temporary teeth: placed at surgery or shortly after (varies by plan).
- Healing/integration period: commonly ~3–4 months before the final set is made (sometimes longer depending on bone, grafting, and healing).
- Final bridge: created after coordination between your surgeon and restoring dentist once implants are stable and tissues are mature.
- Expect multiple check-ins/adjustments — they are part of a successful outcome.

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When to call our office

- Fever over 101°F (38.3°C), chills, or worsening swelling after initial improvement.
- Persistent bleeding that does not slow with gentle pressure and rest.
- A sudden new bite change that is severe or worsening, or if the temporary bridge feels loose.
- Pus/drainage, foul taste/odor that is worsening, or concern for infection.
- Severe pain not controlled with prescribed medications, or new numbness that concerns you.

Reminder: the implants are strongest after they heal — protect them now with a soft diet and timely bite adjustments so your final teeth can be made on a stable foundation.

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