



PERIODONTICS, DENTAL IMPLANTS,  
AND COMPLEX CASE MANAGEMENT

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- **Introduction:** A surgical stent is a custom constructed thin clear plastic device that appears somewhat similar to an orthodontic retainer. A mold of your teeth will be made for use in construction of this device. You are able to place or remove the stent at any time.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of a surgical stent is to provide a protective cover over a surgical site. Early in the post-op course following surgery, a surgical stent will apply pressure to a surgical site to reduce risk for postoperative bleeding and/or help stabilize tissue position following the surgery. After the first 24 hours, the use of a surgical stent is primarily for your comfort.
- **Instructions for use:** At your surgical appointment you will be shown how to place and remove your surgical stent. Often, there will be a piece of cloth material placed over the surgical site, which is positioned between your tissue and the surgical stent. This cloth material assists in preventing further bleeding. Unless instructed otherwise, you should leave your stent in place for the first 24 hours following your periodontal surgery. After 24 hours, you may remove the stent for cleaning purposes. You may brush all areas that were not involved in the surgery. You may also rinse your mouth gently, with warm salt water. The piece of cloth material may fall out at any time the surgical stent is out of your mouth. If the cloth material does fall out, discard it. Do not attempt to replace it in your mouth. If the cloth material is half in and half out, use your tongue to gently move the loose half back into position and then place your stent back in your mouth. The cloth material has done its job after the first 24 hours, however if you remove it (as opposed to it falling out passively) you may disturb the surgery site and create bleeding. This is why it is important to let the material fall out by itself.
- **Length of use:** Most individuals will use a surgical stent full-time for 7-10 days. Please be advised that after the first 3 days following surgery, a surgical stent is primarily used for your comfort. If the stent makes your mouth more comfortable, be sure to use it. If the stent bothers you and/or your surgical site is not uncomfortable without the stent, its use may be omitted. Use of a stent, or not using it, does not impact the length or rate of healing time. Remember, after the first few days this device is primarily for your comfort. It's use is up to you. Most people will "wean" out of a stent somewhere between 7 and 10 days following surgery. During this process most individuals will use the stent during mealtime and leave it out at other times. Again, let comfort be your guide. Most people are completely out of a surgical stent after 14 days.