

Soft Tissue Grafting Instructions

How well and how rapidly your oral tissues heal following surgery depends in part upon you and your home care. By carefully reading and following the instructions below you can avoid the most common post-operative problems.

Immediately following surgery: Do not disturb surgical area. Avoid rinsing, spitting, or touching the wound on the day of surgery. Avoid eating, drinking, or smoking for at least one hour after procedure to permit undisturbed blood clotting and hardening of any dressing that may have been placed to protect surgical area. Avoid strenuous work or exercise for 24 hours post-surgery. Be careful so you do not bite your lips or tongue while they are still numb from anesthesia. **Please do NOT play with the surgery area with your fingers or tongue. Do NOT pull up or down the lip or cheek to look at the area and do not have someone else look at the area.**

Bleeding: There may be some bleeding for a few hours after surgery. To reduce prolonged bleeding, do not forcefully spit. Pressure should be applied with a damp washcloth. Sleep with your head slightly elevated to reduce bleeding. Red saliva can be normal up to 24 hours after the procedure.

Swelling: Discomfort and swelling may be expected following certain periodontal surgical procedures. Be sure to take your prescribed medications or over the counter medications for pain control. Swelling can be addressed by applying an ice pack on the outside of the face over the operated areas as follows: 10 minutes on, 10 minutes off, etc. for approximately 4 hours following surgery. Do not be alarmed if you see bruising on the outside of your mouth. Facial bruising can be non-existent to very extensive as this varies between patients.

Homecare: Maintain normal oral hygiene measures in the areas of your mouth not affected by the surgery. Gently rinse with the prescription rinse (Perioguard/Chlorhexidine) in the morning and before bed the day following surgery. You may use warm saltwater throughout the day to promote faster healing. (1 teaspoon of salt per 8 ounces of warm water). **Please avoid** using straws or forceful spitting. **Do not use** electric or manual toothbrush or waterpik in the treated area. At your first post op, we will instruct you how to begin brushing the site, if ready.

Diet: Please follow a soft food diet, taking care to avoid the surgical area(s) when chewing. Chew on the opposite side and do NOT bite into food if the procedure was done in the front of the mouth. Avoid sticky, hard (such as ice cubes, nuts, popcorn, chips), brittle, spicy, highly seasoned, or acidic foods in your diet. Foods such as soups, pasta, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, macaroni & cheese, tuna etc. are best. Be sure to maintain adequate nutrition and drink plenty of fluids. **Avoid alcohol (even beer and wine) and smoking until after your post-operative appointment. Smoking is not advised during the 7-14 days following surgery.**

Sutures/Stitches: Stitches have placed and may be dissolvable or non-dissolvable depending on your surgery. Dissolvable stitches will break down within 1-3 weeks depending on the kind used. If non-dissolvable stitches were placed, we will inform you and discuss the timeline for removal. Please do not cut stitches out or pull at stitches as this may disrupt the healing site and lead to complications.

Surgical dressing: Periodontal clay may be applied following most periodontal surgical procedures to protect the treated areas. The clay may chip off or fall out completely on its own. If it has not come off on its own, after 5 days of your surgical appointment you will need to gently remove the dressing. It should just pop off with your fingernail. Do not use any type of instrument to remove the dressing. Otherwise, we will remove it at your post op.

Gum graft: If a gum graft was performed, avoid any movement of the graft. If your tissue graft used your own tissue from the roof of your mouth, be cautious the first 24 hours to ensure the site does not get aggravated and create a bleed. The roof of the mouth will feel sore for up to a week but should heal in that time.

Use caution when washing your face, shaving, or applying makeup. Do not extend your lip to see the area. Do not bite into any foods where the graft was placed for 3 weeks. The grafted site will take longer to heal and will not be stable for a minimum of 4 weeks.

Contact your Periodontist in case of the following:

- Severe, uncontrolled bleeding or pain; especially if it begins after 24 hours.
- Swelling which has onsets 48 hours after surgery.
- Elevated temperature (over 101 degrees F)
- If after 3-4 days you experience any bleeding, progressive aching, or throbbing

Please call our office at: **(262) 547-1877**

For after office hours, please call or text:

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