

POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOFT TISSUE GRAFTING

Proper care of your mouth following periodontal surgery is very important for the healing process. Each person responds differently and the post-operative discomfort, swelling, and bleeding may vary from procedure to procedure. Please follow these instructions carefully to speed healing and make you more comfortable.

DISCOMFORT AND MEDICATIONS

- **Please take medications as directed.** Variation from the prescribed regimen can affect healing and success of the surgical procedure. *In some cases pain may last 7-10 days following the procedure.*
- The majority of the discomfort is typically within the first 24-72 hours following surgery. **Pain medication has been prescribed** and is best started before the numbness wears off. If taking a narcotic, it is recommended to take it with food, avoid alcohol, and do not drive

SWELLING

- Slight swelling and/or bruising of the surgical area is not unusual and may occur after surgery.
- Gently apply an ice pack wrapped in a thin cloth towel to the outside of your face to minimize the swelling for the first 8-12 hours after surgery (20 minutes on and then off).
- Keep your head elevated above the level of your heart during the first 24 hours. This may necessitate the use of several pillows while sleeping.
- If swelling does occur, it should start to disappear in 3-4 days. If needed after the second day, apply moist heat to the area.

BLEEDING

- Bleeding/oozing may occur for the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If excessive bleeding occurs at the donor site, apply a moist gauze or **wet tea bag with firm, direct pressure to the surgical DONOR SITE**, holding with thumb or two fingers firmly is best to stop bleeding. **Black tea seems to work the fastest** (tannic acid in the tea will aid in clotting) **DO NOT PLACE GAUZE OR TEA BAG ON GRAFT.**
- **AVOID** any positive or negative pressure which may dislodge your clot (such as forceful spitting, rinsing, drinking through a straw, or blowing your nose forcefully).

SUTURES

- Sutures (stitches) have been placed to hold the gums in the proper position for the ideal healing. **Some sutures will dissolve in the first week or become loose this is normal.** Others will be removed 2-4 weeks after surgery. Please **DO NOT REMOVE YOUR SUTURES.**
- **DO NOT disturb the sutures with your tongue, toothbrush** or in any other manner since displacement may impair healing. *****Stretching your lip to look at the site will also disturb the sutures... just don't look until 14 days after procedure*****

APPEARANCE OF THE GRAFT

• **During the normal course of healing, the tissue graft may change appearance and color. The color may appear white/gray/red during the healing period. Do NOT be alarmed by the appearance of the graft!**

THERE WILL BE MANY CHANGES IN GRAFT APPEARANCE OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS!

• **To minimize the chance of failure, remember that the graft sites should not be disturbed. Minimize movement of the lips and mouth by not stretching lip or pulling your lip out to look at the graft, or for any other reason.**

***Our clinical staff is also unable to look at the graft site before the window of healing to ensure the best possible outcome.**

• You may have some purple tissue “glue” around the surgical site. Do not be alarmed if pieces of the glue fall off during healing.

DIET • For your comfort and to protect the surgical area, do not chew until the numbness has subsided. Avoid chewing in the area of the surgery until after sutures are removed. ***A soft diet is recommended until otherwise directed.***

• **Remember to drink plenty of liquids** and maintain a diet with a normal caloric level. Soft foods high in protein, minerals and vitamins (such as soup, eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, fish, bananas, applesauce, protein shakes, etc.) help support post-surgical healing. You may cut your food and chew in opposite area of graft site.

• **AVOID hard, fibrous, or sharp foods as they may delay the healing (especially seeds, chips, nuts, and popcorn).**

• **AVOID** anything too hot for 48 hours after surgery; cool to lukewarm food and liquids are recommended.

ORAL HYGIENE • Continue to brush and floss the teeth which were NOT involved in the surgery.

• **The surgical site should NOT be disturbed for the first 2 weeks of healing except as directed by your doctor.**

• The chlorhexidine **mouth rinse may be started the day AFTER surgery** so as not to disturb the blood clot the first day. Do not use other mouthwashes. ***No chipmunk cheeks. Lean side to side with mouth closed.***

REST • Avoid strenuous physical activity, heavy lifting and bending over during your immediate recovery period, usually 2 days. This will help to reduce pain, swelling, and help prevent additional bleeding.

Phone Number- Please do not hesitate to call for any questions or concerns you may have about the procedure. **Office number (417)553.0856, after hours and emergency number is (417)434.3707**