



## **Post-Operative Instructions for Gum Grafting**

### **Graft Stability / Immobilization**

The factor that leads to greatest the predictability of a graft's healing and overall success is its immobilization. Your surgeon has taken preventative measures to increase the likelihood of proper healing. However, it is imperative patients continue with these efforts. The patient should never retract their lips or cheeks to inspect the sites; they should never touch the surgical sites with their tongue or fingers. If you wear any removable dental appliance that impinges on the recipient graft site, do not wear it for at least a month following the surgery.

### **Bleeding**

Minor oozing/bleeding is normal for the first few post-operative days. If bleeding occurs it is more likely to occur from the roof of your mouth. If excessive bleeding is noted, apply moderate pressure with moistened gauze or a moist black tea bag over the bleeding site for 20 minutes. If the bleeding cannot be controlled during that time, please contact **Dr. Barnett at 831-277-5163**.

### **Swelling**

Some swelling is normal following surgery, with it typically peaking on the second or third day following surgery. Swelling can be minimized by cryotherapy. Extra-oral icing of the surgical areas can be performed with an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables. When icing, alternate apply cold for 20 minutes on and then 20 minutes off. If anti-inflammatory medications have been prescribed, take them as indicated on the prescription.

### **Medications and Pain Killers**

If antibiotics were prescribed, take them as directed and finish the prescription. If you smoke, do not smoke for at least 3 weeks after surgery. Smoking significantly decreases the healing ability of patients and will compromise your graft. If you're not allergic to ibuprofen, take it every 6 hours for the first 3-4 days. In the rare instance ibuprofen is not good enough to take away the pain, take the codeine every 4-6 hours or as needed; never drink alcohol or drive with this medication.

### **Diet**

A well-balanced soft diet should be employed for the first 3 weeks following surgery. Try to avoid chewing on the surgical sites. Avoid foods that are hot, spicy, have small seeds (such as certain berries), or have thin hard husks (such as popcorn). Acidic drinks such as soda and orange juice for the first week. Any cooked meals should be allowed to cool to at least room temperature before eating. Patients are encouraged to eat colder, soft foods (ice cream, yogurt, cottage cheese, and milkshakes – never with a straw) and drink ice water for the first three days following surgery.

### **Oral Hygiene / Mouth Rinse**

Never brush or floss any teeth in the surgical areas for three weeks following surgery. Starting the day after surgery, use the prescribed chlorhexidine gluconate (0.12%) rinse at least twice a day (after breakfast and before bed), rinsing for 30 seconds. When rinsing, do not swish vigorously to avoid stretching the cheeks. Spit passively, allowing gravity to dump the rinse in the sink. Do not rinse with water, eat, or drink for at least an hour following the rinse. Alternatively, the patient can dip a cotton swab in the prescription mouth rinse and wipe the teeth. Normal oral hygiene can be used in non-surgical areas.

### **Activity**

Limit your physical activities the first week following the procedure. Increasing your blood pressure / heart rate with strenuous exercise may cause increased bleeding at the surgical sites.

**Do not hesitate to call if you have any questions.**

DR. ANDREW BARNETT AT 469-850-2271

OR

VICTORIA PARMER AT 469-850-2270