

CARE FOLLOWING SOFT TISSUE GRAFT SURGERY

To insure your comfort and the success of treatment, we strongly suggest that the following instructions be carried out:

Oral skin grafts are very fragile for the first week following surgery. You will need to take special care to protect the site so that the graft will not be displaced.

1. WORK, EXERCISE & SEDATION: RETURN HOME IMMEDIATELY AND RELAX. The sedative medicine takes some time to completely wear off, possibly as much as 24 hours. It is normal to sleep a good deal during this period. Do not try to drive or operate any machinery for 12 hours, as your reaction time is slowed. It is advised to not use alcohol while on sedatives. We suggest complete rest for the first 6-12 hours, as this will reduce discomfort, decrease swelling and speed healing. Work can be resumed the following day, but you may choose to wait several days. **DO NOT UNDERTAKE ANY STRENUOUS EXERCISE FOR SEVERAL DAYS.**

2. DIET: SOFT AND COOL for the first 24 hours after surgery. We encourage you to restrict your diet to soft, nourishing foods, and plenty of liquids, as this will aid in healing. It is advisable to chew only on the side opposite surgery. Bland foods lacking high seasoning are less irritating and are encouraged during the healing phase as well. Some suggested foods: Dairy products, eggs, instant breakfast, ice cream, Jell-o, pudding, yogurt, milkshakes, blended or pureed foods, and/or dietary supplements (Ensure, Boost, etc.)

For 24 hours after surgery, hot foods and drinks should be avoided because heat can cause swelling around the surgical site. **AN ICE PACK (or crushed ice in a Zip-lock bag, covered with a thin towel) HELD ON THE LIP OR CHEEK OVER THE SURGICAL SITE FOR 20 MINUTES ON, AND 1 HOUR OFF WILL HELP REDUCE SWELLING (during the initial 12-24 hours).** If swelling appears to be increasing beyond the initial 72 hours please call our office.

3. HOME CARE: Plaque control procedures must not be neglected, even during the post-operative phase of treatment. Beginning the day after surgery, all teeth NOT surgically treated must be brushed and flossed as you normally do. Teeth treated are not to be brushed until you return for post-surgical care. Toothpaste may be irritating to the healing tissues. **START THE PRESCRIPTION MOUTH RINSE THE FOLLOWING MORNING AFTER SURGERY.**

4. MEDICATION: Pain medication may or may not be prescribed depending on the severity of your surgical procedure. If it is not prescribed or if you do not need it, Ibuprofen (Advil)(3-4 tabs every 8 hours) or Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be used (2 tablets every 8 hours) will generally keep you comfortable. Do not take pain medication if it is not needed.

Prescription medications are quite strong, to avoid mild symptoms of nausea, the medication should be taken with food. You should avoid operating machinery or driving while taking prescription medications.

5. PERIODONTAL DRESSING: The graft is held in by sutures that will be removed approximately 7-10 days following surgery. A periodontal dressing (pack) has been placed over the graft. The dressing will harden to a firm, plastic-like consistency. It will also protect the grafted area, and allow it to be undisturbed during healing. If it comes out after 3-4 days, Do Not worry, Generally it will stay until your post-operative appointment. If it becomes loose do not try to remove it as it may be attached to sutures. Try to push it back in to the original position.

If you were given a plastic covering (stent) for your palate, wear it as much as possible. It will be removed at your post-operative appointment. It is for your comfort and to protect the wound of the donor site.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION: Slight oozing of blood that tints the saliva pink is normal for the first few days. If continuous bleeding occurs from the donor site, try applying 15 minutes of pressure to the palate, over the stent, with a **MOISTENED** tea bag. If it does not subside with several attempts, please call.

REFRAIN FROM SMOKING DURING INITIAL HEALING PHASE, AS IT SLOWS THE HEALING PROCESS. SMOKING ALSO IRRITATES THE SURGICAL AREAS. DO NOT USE STRAWS FOR DRINKING AFTER ANY DENTAL SURGICAL PROCEDURE.