

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER GINGIVAL GRAFTS

- 1. Discomfort and Prescriptions:** If permitted, Ibuprofen (regular strength): 3 tabs of 200 mg (total 600 mg per dose) every 6 hours for 3 days (continue after 3 days if needed) and supplement with Tylenol (extra strength): up to 2 tabs of 500 mg (total of 1000 mg per dose) – every 6 hours along with the Ibuprofen.

Please keep in mind the daily maximum dosages: **Ibuprofen=2400 mg per day; Tylenol=4000 mg per day.**

If the pain continues to increase after 5 days, call us. If steroids or narcotics are prescribed, please follow instructions written on bottle.

- 2. Antibiotics:** Be sure to take the prescribed antibiotics as directed to help prevent infection.
- 3. Anesthetics:** The duration of the anesthesia depends on the type used. While your mouth is numb, be careful not to bite your tongue, cheek or lip. The numbness should only last a few hours.
- 4. Bleeding:** Slight oozing of blood may last several hours. Some bleeding or redness in the saliva is normal for 24 to 48 hours after the surgery. If the bleeding appears more than described, you can apply pressure to the area. If it is the surgical site on the roof of your mouth, use one of the 2x2 cottons given, a folded cold washcloth or a damp tea bag (not herbal) and apply firm pressure with your thumb to the area for **30 minutes**. If it is the area where the graft was placed, apply gentle pressure to the outside of the face directly over the area. Avoid removing the pressure prematurely to verify if the bleeding has stopped during the first 30 minutes. Keep your head elevated. Remain calm. Avoid suctioning or spitting. If the bleeding persists after the first 30 minutes of pressure, repeat these instructions and contact us.
- 5. Swelling:** Some swelling and ecchymosis is a normal occurrence after surgery. It normally peaks at day 3 after the surgery. To minimize swelling, apply an ice bag on the cheek in the area of surgery. Apply the ice on the outside of the face for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off and repeat as much as possible for the first 48 hours. After 48 hours, a hot cloth can be applied to help decrease the swelling. If the swelling continues to increase after 72 hours, contact us.
- 6. Diet/Alcohol/Smoking:** Do not consume hot liquids/food for the first **48 hours**.
  - A soft diet (avoid hard and crispy food such as nuts, chips, firm bread, uncooked vegetables, etc.) is recommended for **14 days** following the surgery **\*\*Avoid eating on the treated side\*\***
  - Alcohol thins the blood and may cause extra bleeding. It should be avoided for the first week after surgery. Avoid using a straw.
  - Smoking may affect the healing process and should be avoided or reduced as much as possible during the first 2 weeks.
- 7. Graft Site:**
  - The area from which the graft tissue was taken will feel uncomfortable for several days. The feeling is sometimes described as having been burned with hot food or a hot drink.
  - DO NOT touch the surgical site for the first **2 weeks**; you might dislodge the healing tissue and compromise the success of the graft.
  - DO NOT pull your lip away or out to view the graft.
  - DO NOT put your tongue on the stitches.

- It is normal for the surgical area to undergo changes during the first couple of weeks. The tissue will appear white and filmy, (Scabs are white in the wet oral environment) then it will turn pink. This is normal healing of the graft.

**8. Oral Hygiene:**

- You will not be able to brush or floss the surgical area until you return for your post-operative visit **\*\*You will be advised by your periodontist when you are able to start brushing and flossing around the surgical site\*\***. Brush the teeth away from the surgical site with usual toothpaste and floss regularly.
- You will be given a rinse to use. Be sure to take the prescribed rinse as directed to help prevent infection. **\*\*Do not rinse forcefully; soak the area\*\*** Avoid any other mouthwashes.
- Electronic Toothbrushes and Water Picks: DO NOT use for at least 6 weeks following surgery.

**9. Sutures:** The non-resorbable sutures will have to be removed 1-month post-surgery. Some may be resorbable (self-dissolving) and will go away on their own during the first 1-2 weeks after the intervention.

**10. Periodontal dressing:** A dressing (Band-Aid) may be covering the surgical site in order to protect the wound from the tongue or food, which may cause discomfort. The healing will not be impaired if the dressing is lost prematurely. To allow the dressing to be maintained as long as possible, avoid eating on its side or touching it with your tongue.

**11. Activity:** For the first 48 hours, avoid physical activity that increases your heartbeat (jogging, bike, swimming, yoga) and avoid heavy lifting.

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