

Post-Operative Instructions for Tissue Graft Treatment

Congratulations! You have just completed a tissue graft procedure as part of your dental care and it is now time for the healing process to begin. It is important to understand that some discomfort, swelling and bruising is normal. Every patient is different so there is no way of predicting if you will experience any of these symptoms. The medications and mouthwash prescribed to you will help keep you comfortable for the next several days. **Please follow the instructions carefully when taking these medications.**

Visual Appearance of Surgical Site: The site where the tissue has been grafted to may appear white in color a few days following surgery and the outer layer of tissue may “slough off”. This is **NOT** cause for alarm as the tissue will go through cosmetic stages of healing before turning a nice pink in color. You may also notice a slight odor from this site which is not cause for alarm. The sutures around the grafted tissue will come out on their own 5-7 days after surgery and we will check the status of your healing at your 2-3 week follow up appointment. You may also feel a ridge in your palate if it was used as the donation site for your graft. These sutures will also come out on their own 2-3 days after surgery. We ask that you not pull your lip or cheek out to observe the surgical site. We want to leave it alone as much as possible over the next 2 weeks.

Bruising/Swelling: Regardless of the use of ice packs, you still may experience a certain amount of swelling or bruising (especially if you are a female). Bruising will subside as any other bruise. We recommend that you use an ice pack 10 minutes out of every ½ hour for the first 24 hours after surgery (as much as possible) and then warm moist heat (warm damp wash cloth) thereafter if necessary for discomfort. If you are concerned about the amount of swelling and/or bruising **PLEASE CALL US**. It is recommended that you try to sleep with your head elevated and try to avoid lying on the side of your surgery to help limit bruising and swelling. It is not uncommon to run a slight fever after any oral surgery procedure and should not be cause for alarm. Your body is responding to your treatment. A sore throat may also be a possibility as the muscles under your tongue run down the back of your throat and may have been disturbed during your treatment to allow access to the surgical site. If this should occur, treat yourself as you would for a common sore throat with lozenges.

Bleeding: We try very hard to not involve major blood vessels in the areas of surgery; however, the small vessels may continue to ooze for a couple of days (especially in your palate) following surgery. If you have caused the area to bleed, or if the persistent oozing is bothersome, put your feet up, elevate your head and place a well-moistened tea bag over the oozing site with pressure for several minutes and sit very still. This will usually slow the bleeding significantly. Do not be alarmed if you awaken with a blood clot in your palate. Some people tend to have a sucking motion in their sleep which increases the blood flow and may cause this clot. Use one of the sterile gauze squares in the care package that you were given. Simply dampen a piece of gauze, wipe the clot away and if oozing begins, utilize your tea bag as previously instructed.

Bandages: If a bandage/packing has been placed (this is not done on all surgical procedures), it should stay in place until you return to our office in 5-7 days, at which time it will be removed. **DO NOT BRUSH AROUND THE PACKING!** The packing is pink in color and will look like you have pink bubble gum stuck to your teeth. If it becomes loose or portions of it come off, do not panic. Gently push it back into place or, if it can not be put back in place, simply remove it. If it comes completely off within 2-3 days after surgery, contact our office for advice. Otherwise, we will remove it at your next visit. A surgical “super glue” **may** have also been used in your palate which is temporary and will come out on it’s own as soon as that evening or may last several days.

Oral Hygiene: Do not brush or floss the surgical site until instructed to do so at your next visit! Brush all of your remaining teeth normally but stay away from the surgical area. We ask that you use the prescription mouthwash dispensed at your appointment (Chlorhexidine) twice daily (using it more often will not benefit your healing and we want it to last the full 2 weeks following surgery). Use this mouthwash **VERY GENTLY** in the surgical area (directions are on the bottle). Do not eat or drink anything 30 minutes **before or after** use as it will decrease the effectiveness of the medication. You will be instructed how to clean the surgical area at your scheduled follow-up appointment in approximately 2 weeks. Do not be alarmed, the mouthwash will keep the surgical site clean and bacteria free until this time. Temporary staining may occur from use of the mouthwash and can be removed at your next recare appointment. You may also experience some tooth sensitivity following surgery for up to several weeks. This sensitivity is usually temporary and will decrease more rapidly once normal brushing and flossing are returned to normal.

Diet Following Surgery: It is very important for you to maintain a well balanced diet during your healing period. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO STAY ON A LIQUID DIET.** There is a list of soft food diet ideas in your care package for you to consider. We ask that you avoid foods with a rough edge, acidic or carbonated in nature, for example; nuts, hard bread, raw vegetables, chips, tomatoes, orange juice, cola, etc.. Avoiding irritating foods/drinks will help to spend your healing more comfortably. **AVOID CHEWING ANY FOODS IN THE SURGICAL AREA UNTIL INSTRUCTED AT YOUR FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT.** The least amount of disturbance of the surgical site during healing, the less likelihood of complications.

Activity: You are advised to take things relatively easy for the next 24-48 hours. The more you can keep your blood pressure down the less likelihood of oozing. If oozing does occur, use your tea bag as previously instructed. The ingredients in the tea will help slow the oozing. If you experience discomfort during activity, it is your body’s way of saying you are doing too much too soon so try again in 2-3 days.

Smoking: If you smoke, we recommend that you **NOT** smoke for the next 3-4 days and preferably decrease smoking by 50% or more for the next several weeks. The heat and the chemicals from the smoke will irritate the surgical site, making it more uncomfortable while it is trying to heal, higher risk of infection and possible failure of treatment.

In the case of an emergency:

If you experience any difficulty breathing, excessive bleeding or any symptoms that seem unusual, please do not hesitate to call. If for any reason you are unable to reach Dr. Sutor and you feel your symptoms warrant a physician’s attention, go to the hospital emergency room.

We are always happy to answer any questions or concerns you might have. Please feel free to call us!