



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

SOFT TISSUE GRAFT

After leaving the office, relax for the remainder of the day. For the next several days: avoid strenuous activity that would increase your heart rate. It is important to NOT spit, rinse hard, drink through a straw, or create a “sucking” action in your mouth – all of these actions can create too much movement and/or pressure on the surgical site.

MOVEMENT

It is important to minimize touching or any movement of the surgical area so that the healing is not impaired. The more stable the graft is the better it will heal. Pulling your lip up/down to look at the graft may cause unwanted movement and should be avoided.

CLEANING

It is important to maintain a normal level of oral hygiene in the non-operated areas by brushing and cleaning like normal. Do not brush, floss, or otherwise physically clean the surgical area for the first 10 days post-operatively, only use a salt water or Crest Pro Health rinse. This should always be done gently by rolling the rinse around your mouth, never vigorously. Carefully and gently rinse three times daily for 60 seconds and then do not rinse or eat for 30 minutes.

EATING

It is recommended to maintain a healthy diet throughout the course of healing. Chewing should be done away from the surgical site (if possible) and with small pieces of food at a time. You should eat only soft foods for 2 weeks after the procedure. In general, to determine if a food is soft you should be able to easily mush it between your fingers. Examples of soft foods are: fish, pasta, thoroughly cooked vegetables, mash potatoes, Jello, eggs, yogurt, etc.

MEDICATIONS

Please follow the instructions on the bottle of any medications prescribed. If any adverse reaction to those medications should arise, such as nausea, itching, bloating, diarrhea or other symptoms, please discontinue the medication and contact our office. Pro-biotic yogurt may help prevent stomach upset while taking antibiotics.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

Smoking and alcohol will impair the ability of oral wounds to heal. Wounds are more vulnerable to these poisons when they are newer, so it is important to avoid smoking for 2 weeks after a surgical procedure. It is generally recommended to minimize alcohol consumption for the first 2 weeks after surgery.



THE TISSUE GRAFT

You may notice the graft turn white over the next few weeks. This is a normal part of the healing process.

DISCOMFORT

Some discomfort should be expected when the dental anesthesia wears off. Please make sure you are taking any pain medications as directed. Discomfort is normal after a soft tissue graft and can last 1-2 weeks, although most patients are pain-free after 1-5 days. If you require additional pain medication please ask.

BLEEDING

There may be a red colouration of your saliva after the surgery as your saliva washes over the wound. This is normal and is often confused as actual bleeding even though it is not. Bleeding can be caused by disturbing the surgical area, physical activity, or hot drinks. If you find that blood is persistently pooling in your mouth, place slightly moistened gauze over the bleeding area and hold with firm but gentle pressure while NOT MOVING for 20 minutes. Make sure you are sitting up and not lying down. You can use moistened gauze, tissue, paper towel, or a tea bag (not herbal tea). If there is no change in the amount of bleeding please call our office for further instructions.

SWELLING

Some swelling may be present the day after the surgery and may peak 2-5 days after surgery. Swelling of the area where the surgery was performed is normal and can be extensive. You can use an ice pack on and off every 20 minutes with gentle pressure to help reduce swelling for the first 36 hours following surgery.

BRUISING

Bruising of an area on the outside of the face is possible, and varies from patient to patient and procedure to procedure. During resolution of the bruising it may extend down the neck or up around the eye – this is expected and nothing to be concerned about.

SUTURES AND DRESSINGS

Sutures (“stitches”) or cyanoacrylate patches (“band-aids”) are placed to hold the gum tissues in the proper position for ideal healing. You may have one or all 3 of these after your graft. Try not to disturb any of these since displacement may impair healing. The dressings and sutures will dislodge or dissolve anywhere from 1-14 days after the procedure – this is normal and not a cause for concern. If they have not, they will often be removed at your first post-op appointment (approx. 10 days later).