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**INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING GINGIVAL GRAFTING SURGERY**

**NOTE:** WE REQUIRE AT LEAST A 48 HOUR NOTICE IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO KEEP YOUR SURGERY APPOINTMENT AT THIS TIME. THIS TIME IS BEING RESERVED SPECIALLY FOR YOU. IT IS OUR OFFICE POLICY TO CHARGE PATIENTS FOR APPOINTMENTS THAT ARE MISSED OR CANCELLED WITHOUT 48 HOURS PRIOR NOTICE.

The area grafted **MUST NOT BE** disturbed the first 3 days after surgery. The success of the graft is dependent upon its immobilization. This means **NO** brushing, biting, rinsing frequently, limited talking, **NO SHOWING OF THE SURGICAL AREA** for 3 days. Normal talking may resume following 24 hours following the surgery. Trauma during cleaning of the area should be minimized.

**DRIVING:** If you have been given a sedative (Valium or Ativan) before or during the operation, do not drive an automobile for that day.

**DISCOMFORT:** Two prescriptions for pain medication (a narcotic and an anti-inflammatory pain medication) may be given to you. Have prescriptions filled prior to your surgery.

- Vicodin or other narcotic pain medication will affect your reflexes. Do not drive while taking this medication.
- The anti-inflammatory medication Celebrex or Motrin is an effective pain reliever and can be used while driving and working.
- DO NOT take either medication on an empty stomach as it may cause nausea.

**ORAL HYGIENE:**

- **DO NOT RINSE** your mouth for 24 hours after surgery.
- **BEGIN THE DAY AFTER SURGERY:** Rinse gently with anti-bacteria mouthwash such as Peridex (Chlorhexidine), warm salt water or other recommended mouthwash for the first week. After one week, either continue to rinse with the antibacterial mouthwash or use a Q-tip dipped in the mouthwash gently swabbing teeth surfaces in the graft area, being careful not to disturb the graft.
- **DO NOT BRUSH** the graft area(s) for 1 week. **AFTER ONE WEEK** gently brush the TOP of the grafted teeth ONLY with the very soft red toothbrush that we will give you. Avoid contact with the gum graft area. **IF GRAFT IS TAKEN FROM PALATAL AREA**, gently brush the teeth adjacent to this area. BE CAREFUL not to disturb the stitches on the roof of the mouth.
- **REST OF TEETH** resume normal brushing 24 hours after surgery, BE CAREFUL not to disturb the graft area. If unable to resume brushing, continue rinsing with Peridex (Chlorhexidine) or warm salt water for 1 to 2 weeks.
- **DO NOT FLOSS, and use an ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH** on the graft area for 6 WEEKS AFTER the surgery.

**SWELLING:** Swelling that occurs within the first 48 hours following surgery is NORMAL. This swelling may last up to one week. However, swelling that BEGINS after 3 days may indicate an infection and our office should be contacted immediately. During the first 24 to 48 hours after the surgery, place an icepack on the outside of your face 15 minutes ON and 15 minutes OFF to help reduce any swelling you may have. If you don't have an icepack, a plastic bag with ice cubes or a bag of frozen peas will suffice. You may let small ice chips dissolve in your mouth as well. Sleep and rest with head elevated on 2 pillows for 2 days. Sleep on your back as much as possible.

**BLEEDING:**

It is normal for wounds to seep small amounts of blood for a day or two after surgery causing blood stains in saliva. There may be occasional bleeding for the first few hours following surgery. Firm finger pressure directly over the area with damp black tea bags or damp gauze for 15-20 minutes should stop the bleeding. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should rinsing be used to stop bleeding. Also, stay away from anything that can cause a vacuum in your mouth, such as using a straw, or spitting for 48 hours following surgery.

**Note:** Bleeding does not usually occur in the area of the graft, but may occur on the roof of the mouth. Remember, minimize movement of the graft.

**BRUISING:**

Some bruising can be expected after surgery. To minimize bruising, begin drinking pineapple juice AFTER surgery and continue for 1 week or longer if bruising remains. Pineapple juice contains Bromelain. As an alternative, begin Bromelain Plus after surgery to help decrease bruising. Bromelain pills can be purchased at Whole Foods or GNC. Take 1 tablets 3 times a day, between meals. DO NOT use if you have ulcers or are taking prescription anticoagulants. This herb may interact with other medications. Minimize use if taking anticoagulation medications such as Aspirin, Motrin, etc.

**DRINKING:**

Drink plenty of water, DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES during the first 24 hours following surgery OR while taking narcotic pain pills. Hot liquids should be avoided as they tend to dissolve blood clots and bleeding can occur. Water, lukewarm fluids and juices that do not contain citrus(e.g. oranges, tangerines, grapefruits, lemons, limes) are the best beverages. AVOID drinks with caffeine as these are dehydrating. NO SMOKING during the period of healing.

**EATING:**

AVOID EATING foods such as chips, peanuts, whole apples, or any other foods which you must bite into or could cause irritation.

AVOID EATING foods with small seeds such as poppy seeds, sesame seeds, strawberry seeds, blue berry, and popcorn, etc.

Eat soft food for 3 days after surgery, such as fish, bananas, milk, soup, cottage cheese, refried beans, eggs, etc.

DO NOT BITE INTO ANY FOODS WITH THE TEETH YOU HAD THE GUM GRAFT ON such as hamburgers, sandwiches, hard fruits, hard vegetables, etc. FOR TWO WEEKS. You may CUT foods into bite size pieces.

**ACTIVITIES:**

Avoid any strenuous physical activity for **at least 4 days** after surgery. Mild exercise is okay after 4 days. Regular exercise can be resumed in one week. Avoid bending over for 1 week.

**SUTURES:**

The stitches placed in the graft may loosen or fall out. As long as they remain in place the first 24 hours, this is not a problem. Stitches are generally removed from the palatal area 7-14 days after surgery. Some of the stitches around the graft will dissolve on their own.

If a surgical glue was used, pieces may become dislodged and fall off.

If any loose stitch or glue is pulling the gingival graft, call our office so that we may eliminate the pull on the graft area.

If periodontal dressing placed on the roof of the mouth, and it come off automatically, please discard it.

**COMPLICATIONS:**

Unexpected occurrences are very infrequent. When they occur, they are likely to be the result of your individual healing capacity or may be the result of misunderstood instructions. Rest assured, we will assist you in any way possible with regard to such events. Should the unexpected occur, it is in your best interest to work closely with the doctor and staff. We will support you through any difficulties.

**POST-OP****APPOINTMENTS:**

It is very important that you follow the schedule of appointments we establish after surgery.