

# POST-OP CARE AFTER GUM GRAFT SURGERY

## Oral Hygiene/ Care of your mouth

### Brushing and flossing

- Completely **avoid brushing the surgical site** until given specific instructions during your postoperative visit.
- You may brush and floss all other areas the day following surgery.
- You may notice a white film over the surgical sites; this is completely normal.

## Mouthwash

- Beginning 24 hours AFTER surgery, use one tablespoon of the prescribed mouthwash **3 to 4** times daily, or after every meal. The rinses will be your only method of keeping the surgical site clean.
- Plaque accumulation can slow down the healing process. Rinse only with AO Rinse for the first week, and then switch to Peridex™ for the following week.
- Do not rinse vigorously. Simply allow the rinse to wash over the graft site for 30 seconds and then let the fluid come out of the side of your mouth.
- Try to avoid spitting. Follow this same guideline when expelling liquid after teeth brushing. Avoid PEROXIDE-based and ALCOHOL-based rinses, such as Listerine®, until 8 weeks after surgery.

## Electric toothbrushes

Do not use an electric toothbrush or a Waterpik® anywhere in the mouth for 8 weeks following surgery.

## Eating

Do not eat/chew on or around the surgical site for at least 4 weeks.

## For the first 24 hours

Adequate nutrition is essential at all times for normal healing.

- Immediately following surgery, your diet should be restricted to **liquids**: Smoothies are an ideal choice. Warm soups are acceptable. Dietary supplements such as Instant Breakfast®, Ensure® or Vega® One are also good options.
- **Do not skip meals**. If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort, and heal faster

## After 24 hours

Gradually progress to soft foods such as:

- Soup
- Steamed vegetables
- Baked fish
- Pasta
- Smoothies
- Oatmeal
- Yogurt

NB: Probiotics are highly recommended. These are to be taken with the prescribed antibiotic.

### Foods/drinks to AVOID for the first several weeks:

- Hard/tough/crunchy foods
- Spicy foods
- Meals with grains, seeds or nuts
- Carbonated drinks
- Drinking through a straw

Ideally, alcohol should be avoided for at least the first 48 hours in order to prevent excessive **bleeding**.

**Do not smoke for 3 weeks after surgery**. Smoking is detrimental to healing tissues and will affect the results of surgery. If you can stop smoking for 3 weeks after your surgery, you are well on your way to breaking the habit all together.

## Activities

### Rest:

Plan to rest at home the remainder of the day of surgery as well as the following day. You may read, watch TV or work at your desk at home. When sleeping, elevate your head to decrease swelling.

### After 24 hours:

You may return to your regular schedule, but avoid strenuous activities such as heavy lifting, jogging, cycling and exercise programs for at least 3 DAYS following the day of surgery.

## Pain Medications

- Take pain medication for the remainder of the day with a meal, fruit juice, or a full glass of water.
- Try to avoid taking pain medication on an empty stomach. This medication may be repeated every 4 to 6 hours as needed for discomfort.
- Take some prior to going to bed and some the next morning.
- **Do not use Aspirin®** or products containing aspirin/ASA following surgery. Such medications can contribute to bleeding problems. Only non-aspirin pain relievers are recommended.
- If you have a history of stomach ulcers and/or gastric reflux, refrain from taking ibuprofen or other NSAID pain killers. In these cases, acetaminophen is a good option.

## Swelling

Some swelling usually occurs after periodontal surgery. To minimize this, you will be advised to use ice packs.

- Place the ice pack only on the outside of your face, and never over the surgical site inside the mouth.
- Ice packs can be used after surgery: 10 minutes on, 10 minutes off.
- You may continue to apply ice packs as much as possible the first 12 hours after surgery

## Bleeding

Slight bleeding or oozing is normal during the first 1-2 days following surgery. If excessive bleeding occurs, DO NOT dab or put pressure on the surgical site at any time. Please call our office if you have any issues with excessive bleeding.

## Sutures

You have non-dissolving sutures holding the graft site together. One set of sutures will be removed 4 weeks after surgery and the other set another 4 weeks after that.

- Please refrain from touching or pulling on the sutures at any time.
- Try to avoid playing with the sutures with your tongue, as this can affect the success of the graft.

## Graft site

Do not pull on your lip to look at the graft site. This can create tension on the site and can put the sutures and graft at risk. Too much movement and tension on the graft site can ultimately lead to the failure of the graft.