



*Dentistry Dedicated
to Excellence*

Connective Tissue Graft Post-operative Instructions

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should be kept in place for a half hour. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area following surgery should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- Take the prescribed pain medications as soon as you begin to feel discomfort this will usually coincide with the local anesthetic becoming diminished.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery and resume normal activity when you feel comfortable.
- Place ice packs to the sides of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for explanation.

BLEEDING

A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Excessive bleeding may be controlled by first rinsing or wiping any old clots from your mouth, then placing a gauze pad over the area and biting firmly for thirty minutes. Repeat if necessary. If bleeding continues, bite on a moistened tea bag for thirty minutes. The tannic acid in the tea bag helps to form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels. To minimize further bleeding, do not become excited, sit upright, and avoid exercise. If bleeding does not subside, call for further instructions.

SWELLING

The swelling that is normally expected is usually proportional to the surgery involved. Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes and sides of the face is not uncommon. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. The swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs. Two baggies filled with ice, ice packs, or even a bag of frozen peas should be applied to the side of the face where surgery was performed. The ice packs should be left on for 20 minutes and then removed for 20 minutes for the next 6 hours while you are awake. The less swelling, the less pain. Do not use hot packs or a hot water bottle. After 36 hours, ice has no beneficial effect.

PAIN

For moderate pain, Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) 2-4 of the 200 mg tablets may be taken every 6 hours. For severe pain take the tablets prescribed for pain as directed. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your

reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more each day. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office.

DIET

After general anesthetic or I.V. sedation, liquids should be taken at first. Do not use straws. Drink from a glass. The sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Nourishment should be taken regularly. You should prevent dehydration by taking fluids regularly. Your food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. At least 5-6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat. Caution: If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy. Therefore, immediately following surgery, if you are lying down, make sure you sit for a minute before standing.

KEEP THE MOUTH CLEAN

No rinsing of any kind should be done until the day following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery but rinse gently. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 2 times a day especially after eating with chlorhexidine. Rinse gently without force. Gently let the solution roll out of your mouth. Do not spit forcefully. **REMEMBER: A CLEAN WOUND HEALS BETTER AND FASTER.**

DO NOT USE WARM SALT WATER RINSES

DISCOLORATION

In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post-operatively. Moist heat applied to the area may speed up the removal of the discoloration.

ANTIBIOTICS

If you have been placed on antibiotics take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics are not routinely prescribed for routine oral surgery. Discontinue antibiotic use in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. Call the office if you have any questions.

NAUSEA AND VOMITING

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on coke, tea or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine. If your nausea and/or vomiting persist and is intolerable contact the office.

Sleep somewhat inclined

For the first 2 nights after the procedure, sleep in a recliner chair or with your head propped up with some pillows. A recliner is better. If you keep your head above your heart level for the first 2 days, it will significantly cut down on post-op swelling. The less swelling, the less pain.

Exercise

Avoid strenuous exercise for the first 7 days. Strenuous physical activity may increase postoperative pain or cause post-operative bleeding and swelling. Less activity equals less pain.

Oral hygiene

You can brush the other areas of your mouth as normal but **do not brush around the area of the graft for the first 4 weeks even with a hand held toothbrush.** After 4 weeks a soft manual toothbrush may be used gently around the tooth/teeth where the graft was placed. Do not floss around the tooth/teeth worked on for 4 weeks as well. You may resume using a water-pik and an electric toothbrush around the graft area 8 weeks after the procedure.

Touching the surgical site

It is important that the surgical site remains untouched during the initial stages of healing. **We recommend that you avoid stretching your mouth to look at the site.** Use caution when washing your face, and avoid playing with your tongue on the surgical sites.

Stitches

Usually non-dissolvable black silk stitches are used on the palate and they need to be removed in about one week. If they dangle and bother you, cut the dangling part with a small, clean pair of bathroom scissors. The white stitches on the grafted tooth/teeth will need to be removed in about 2 weeks whereas the stitches inside the grafted area are dissolvable, meaning they will eventually fall out on their own in 3 to 4 weeks.

Bleeding

"Pink" saliva is normal for a few days. If you get any bleeding, the usual source is the donor site (roof of the mouth). Many patients will have some. Wipe it clean of any "blood clots" first. It has to be thoroughly cleaned first. Then apply gentle (it doesn't need to be real hard) pressure to the palate (roof of the mouth) for 10 straight minutes with a soaking wet tea bag (black tea works the best), or a soaking wet gauze pad, or a clean washcloth, etc. Be sure it is soaking wet. If it is not, the clot will stick to it and start bleeding again when you pull it away. If it just won't stop, call.

Food

Stay on a soft diet, chew away from the grafted tooth/teeth and avoid any foods that would be more likely to get stuck in the gum graft site, such as corn, popcorn, nuts, and seeds (fruits like strawberries have seeds). Do this for up to 4 weeks. Citric juices, carbonated beverages or acidic foods, like tomatoes, may make it hurt, but won't damage the graft healing though. For the first 7 days avoid really hot foods or drinks. Several glasses a day for the 1st week or 2 of a nutritional food supplement (Carnation Instant Breakfast drink, Ensure, Slim-Fast, etc.) is advisable as a food supplement. Ensure makes a product called Glucerna for diabetics. After 3 weeks, there should be no eating restrictions. Nothing but light sucking with a straw for the first 2 weeks. No milkshakes with a straw for 3 weeks.

Smoking

Graft failure rates triple with smoking within the first 7 days after the graft procedure. Smoking causes more post-operative pain, as well. If you do smoke, keep it 5 cigarettes or less per day and only smoke half the cigarette. No cigars or pipes.

MEDICATIONS AFTER SURGERY

-If you have been taken off blood thinner (Coumadin, Warfarin, Aapixaban, ect), or if your current medications have been altered at all due to your dental surgery, you must contact your physician ASAP to determine if and when you should resume your medications. Delaying this phone call could have potential life-threatening or other serious consequences.

PAIN MEDICATIONS

Unless you have a reason you can't take ibuprofen (such as an allergy to ibuprofen or aspirin, or a stomach ulcer), take 800mg of ibuprofen at a time, 3 times per day. Start the day of the gum graft surgery, and take for the next 2 days. After that you can still take it as needed for pain. Do not use ibuprofen for more than one week. Prescription pain medicines are for severe pain following surgery. It is recommended to take these 2-4 hours following your surgery prior to the numbing wearing off and to continue every 4-6 hours for a total of 24 hours. Take one pain pill as soon as you can after surgery. It will usually work better if taken before the numbness wears off. After that, take only as needed. Take any narcotic pain pills with food and/or plenty of liquid. Do not drive after taking any narcotic pain pill and do not take them with sleeping pills or alcohol. For severe pain, you can alternate one prescription pain pill (those with Tylenol (Acetaminophen) in them such as Vicodin) with two or three Advil every few hours for severe pain. These medicines may cause mild stomach aches, so take with food. After this, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines such as Ibuprofen will take care of most discomfort and help with swelling. If you develop severe throbbing pain 3-4 days after your surgery which is not relieved with pain medication, notify our office.

MEDROL DOSE PACK (may not be prescribed)

The short dose of oral steroids greatly diminishes facial swelling. The Medrol Dose Pak is a tapering dose pack which should begin **the morning of** your surgery, complete all of "First Day" row. You will finish "First Day" row during the remainder of the day of your surgery.

CHLORHEXIDINE ORAL RINSE

Chlorhexidine (Peridex®) is a topical antimicrobial that kills bacteria in your mouth. We have prescribed 3 bottles of it for you and want you to use it until it is all gone. Swish with it the **evening** before your surgery and again in the **morning** before coming to the office. **Do not use Chlorhexidine again until 24 hours after surgery.** 24 hours after surgery start rinsing 3X daily staying away from the surgical site. In the graft area for the first week do not rinse vigorously with the mouth wash but just lightly let the Chlorhexidine "run past" the surgical site. After one week use a Q-tip to apply the Chlorhexidine to the wound. The ear cleaning Q-tips work best, as they are very absorbent and hold a good size drop of liquid. Apply 3 times/day for the next three weeks to the surgical site by dabbing the soaked in chlorhexidine Q-tip to the surgical area. Do not scrub it in. Once this liquid is applied, do not eat, drink or rinse out for 30 minutes.

Antibiotic

If an antibiotic has been prescribed, start taking it the first day (unless directed otherwise) and use to completion. If you are prescribed antibiotics (Penicillin, Keflex, Clindamycin, Erythromycin, Tetracycline's, etc.), you should complete the entire course. You can reduce stomach upset by taking it with food and/or plenty of liquid. Erythromycins should be taken on an empty stomach. Tetracyclines should not be taken with milk products. Otherwise, antibiotics may be taken with food. As with any drug, side effects and allergies may develop. If you develop a skin rash, difficulty breathing or diarrhea, stop taking all medicine and notify the doctor.

PHENERGAN or ZOFTRAN (may not be prescribed)

Phenergan or Zofran is used post operatively to prevent nausea and vomiting. If you experience these symptoms, Phenergan or Zofran should be taken with food thirty minutes prior to taking your pain medications.

SYMPTOMS WHICH MAY OCCUR:

- Swelling of the face is common, and usually is maximized at day three and is resolved by day four to six. This does not imply infection is present. If swelling increases after the fifth day, notify the office.
- Pain is normal after your procedure. Pain medications are often necessary for two to three days. After this the discomfort is often subsided with Advil. You may take two to three Advil every six hours.
- Stiffness of the jaws is common and usually relaxes within one week.
- Bruising may appear by the 2nd or 3rd day and often resolves by day ten.
- Slight numbness of the lip and/or tongue may occur as was previously explained. If the numbness persists for longer than one week, please inform your doctor at the follow-up appointment or by telephone.
- ***After anesthesia, drowsiness may persist up to 24-36 hours. If this occurs do not drive or remain without supervision.***

OTHER COMPLICATIONS

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As stated before surgery, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb you could bite it and not feel it so be careful. Call your dentist if you have any questions about this, or if the numbness persists for longer than one week.
- Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.
- You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. As you were not able to eat or drink prior to surgery, and it is difficult to take fluids, and taking pain medications can make you dizzy. You could get light headed when you stand up suddenly. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute then get up.
- If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as Vaseline.
- Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.
- Your case is individual, no two mouths are alike. Do not take seriously well intended advice from friends. Discuss your problem with the persons best able to effectively help you: Meridian Dental Clinic.
- If you are involved in regular exercise be aware that your normal nourishment intake is reduced exercise may weaken you. If you get light headed stop exercising.

IN CASE OF BLEEDING:

- A plastic "band aid" has been placed over the palate wound. Apply modest pressure with your tongue. This should remain for 24 hours if possible.
- If bleeding continues, moisten a small tea bag and place it over the palate wound while applying modest pressure with your tongue. Repeat if necessary.
- Slight oozing may continue for 1-2 days.

GENERAL DENTAL POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- Use ice packs for 24 hrs to minimize swelling. Alternate off and on every 20 minutes.
- Eat soft foods and maintain adequate daily fluid intake.
- Avoid hot food, carbonated or alcoholic beverages, and smoking for 3 days.

- Avoid the use of straws, vigorous swishing, and spitting for 3 days.
- Beginning the day after surgery, gently rinse with Chlorhexidine as directed.
- Keep your head elevated on 2-3 pillows for 24 hours after surgery to minimize swelling.
- If you had IV Sedation or General Anesthesia, a responsible adult is to remain with you for 24 hours. You may not drive or operate machinery for a minimum of 24 hours.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

1. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns

Office email: office@253dentalcare.com

Office phone number: 253-838-9333

Dentist's Cell Phone number on attached business card

2. Certain conditions may require immediate attention; please contact us at once if you are experiencing:

- a. Bleeding in excessive amounts
- b. Swelling after the first 3 days that seems to be increasing, or swelling in neck or throat area that interferes with breathing
- c. Fever
- d. Pus
- e. Rash, itching, or signs of an allergic reaction to any of the medications that have been prescribed

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE SURGERY APPOINTMENT