

Post-Operative Instructions

Soft Tissue Grafts

Dr. Jonathan Jenkins- Practice Limited to Periodontics & Implant Dentistry

Following a tissue graft, a periodontal dressing is placed over the gums to protect the site during the healing period. Gums will usually start to look normal within a month, while complete healing is expected after two to three months.

Instructions after a gum tissue procedure are the following:

- **DRESSING** - A dressing (packing) has been placed and should stay in place until your next appointment. It is okay if small pieces come off unless it is uncomfortable*.
- **BLEEDING** – some bleeding is normal. You may apply light pressure with a soft cloth to reduce bleeding. It may also be helpful to place a wet teabag on the involved area and applying direct pressure for 15-20 minutes. Avoid rinsing, spitting or sucking through a straw the same day of treatment because it may cause additional bleeding. Call our office if there is excessive or continuous bleeding.
- **SWELLING** – You can have some swelling after tissue grafts. This can be relieved with the periodic application of an ice pack placed outside the mouth over the surgical area. Ice should be applied 10 minutes on and then 10 minutes off for the first 24-48 hours.
- **DISCOMFORT** - Over the counter anti-inflammatories such as Advil, Motrin and Ibuprofen tend to work the best. There may be additional medications prescribed by Dr.Jenkins; you may begin taking these medications the same day of your procedure. Do not pull your lip away to view the graft site.
- **EATING** – Eat soft foods to avoid disturbing the periodontal dressing or injuring the graft site (pudding, milkshakes, scrambled eggs, pasta, mashed potatoes, luke-warm soup, oatmeal, jell-o, etc.) Avoid spicy and crunchy foods, or foods that are either too hot or too cold. Chew away from the tissue site (on the other side of your mouth). Do not bite into food if the graft was done in the front of your mouth.
- **HOME CARE**– Do not rinse or brush your mouth on the first day. Avoid brushing or flossing the treated area until the periodontal dressing is removed. After that, resume brushing using a soft brush. The rest of the mouth should be cleaned normally to avoid the growth of dental plaque that could increase the risk of infection
- **SMOKING** – Avoid smoking or any use of tobacco for 7-14 days following your procedure because it could delay healing. Pipes, cigars and smokeless tobacco should also be avoided.
- **EXERCISE** - Avoid strenuous exercise for the first 5 days after your graft. Strenuous physical activity may increase post-operative pain or cause post-operative bleeding and swelling.
- **FOLLOW-UP** – You should return to our office 7-10 days after your tissue graft. During this visit we will remove the periodontal dressing, the sutures and evaluate the healing progress. Another follow-up will be scheduled later to assess final healing.

*Contact Dr.Jenkins if the periodontal dressing is displaced or you have excessive bleeding, swelling, intense pain or fever.

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