



AFTER GINGIVAL GRAFTING

Our primary goal is to ensure that you recover quickly and fully after your procedure. The best way to support healing and reduce the chances of complications is by carefully following the aftercare instructions provided.

What to Expect After Surgery & Aftercare Instructions

****Swelling:**** Swelling can vary depending on the patient and the procedure. It typically peaks 36-48 hours post-surgery and will gradually reduce over the next 3-4 days. You might also notice minor bruising along with the swelling. In some cases bruising discoloration may occur around the eye or under the chin. It should disappear in 1-2 weeks.

For the first 12 hours after surgery, **gently** apply an ice pack to the surgical area, alternating 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. After this period, ice will have less effect.

****Discomfort:**** The most noticeable discomfort usually occurs right after the anesthesia wears off. We recommend starting your prescribed pain medications before the numbing effect fades completely. Stay on the schedule.

****Bleeding:**** Some minor bleeding or oozing in the first 24 hours from the donor site is common after a grafting procedure. Blood may mix with saliva, which can make it appear worse than it is.

If the bleeding does not stop, place a piece of gauze or a damp black tea bag directly over the affected area and apply firm pressure for at least 20 minutes. Icing area with an ice cube can also help. After 20-30 minutes, the bleeding should subside. If it continues, please contact our office for further guidance.

****Gum graft area appearing white:**** The white appearance on the surface of the grafted site is a normal part of the healing process.

****Palatal bandage:**** Try not to disturb the bandage. It is most effective in stopping bleeding and protecting the site in the first day or two. It may last for the whole two weeks and be removed at your follow-up appointment. However, if it detaches before your 2-week follow-up visit - it should not be a concern. A long hanging suture from the palatal bandage can be trimmed with a small pair of scissors. If you are concerned, please come in and our assistant will gladly help you.

****Sutures:**** Execute care brushing around stitches to avoid disturbing them. While it may be tempting to pull back your lip to check how the surgery is healing, it is very important that you do not do this. Pulling on your lip may put extra tension on the sutures, causing them to come loose early and may interfere with surgical healing.

****Diet:**** After surgery, you can begin drinking liquids immediately. Avoid using straws. Refrain from consuming spicy, hard, fibrous, crunchy, chewy, or hot foods. For the first two weeks, a soft diet (foods you can easily cut with a fork) is strongly recommended to prevent accidental graft displacement. Disrupting the graft's healing process may lead to graft failure.

****Oral Hygiene:**** Start gently rinsing your mouth with a prescribed antimicrobial rinse or warm saltwater 24 hours after surgery. Mix 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a full glass of warm water. Be sure not to swish too vigorously. Aim for about 2-3 rinses a day for the first week. Brushing and flossing is normal everywhere **except** the area of the surgery for one week. After one week, you may gently begin to brush just the biting surfaces of the teeth in the area of the surgery. Do not brush close to the gum line until your doctor gives you clearance.

Do not use oral irrigation devices, like "Waterpik", for the first 2 weeks of healing.

****Taking Antibiotics:**** **If prescribed**, take your antibiotics as directed to prevent or treat infection. Be sure to finish the full course of antibiotics. Keep in mind that antibiotics can interfere with oral contraceptives, so it's recommended to use an additional form of birth control during this time. In case of an adverse reaction like rash or diarrhea, stop and contact our office.

What to Avoid After Your Procedure

* ****Strenuous activity, cardio, steam room, sauna, and heavy lifting for the first 48 hours after surgery.**

* ****Using straws or spitting vigorously for the first 24 hours.**

* ****Rinsing your mouth vigorously** for the first 24 hours.**

* ****Smoking** for at least 24 hours.**

* ****Mixing alcohol with pain medications.****

When to Seek Emergency Care

If you experience any of the following, don't hesitate to contact our office immediately:

* ****Uncontrolled bleeding or significant pain.****

* ****Elevated temperature** (100.5°F or higher).**

* ****Swelling that worsens or starts after several days.****

* ****Inability to open your mouth** beyond five days.**

* ****Ongoing irritation at the IV site.****

If you feel you're facing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 right away.