

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: GUM GRAFTING

There is no healing that occurs for the first 24 hours after a surgical procedure. The natural response to "injury" is swelling. The body always responds to an injury with a predictable inflammatory response as the first step to healing. Our Post-Op Instructions are designed to set up an environment of minimal swelling. Your grafting procedure was performed using a minimally invasive pouch procedure. Because it is a "closed" site, it is more subject to post-operative swelling. It is very important that the post-operative instructions are followed.

### CARE OF THE MOUTH

**Brushing and Flossing.** Begin brushing and flossing the areas not operated on the day following surgery. AVOID THE SURGICAL SITES until given specific brushing instructions at your post-operative visit. You may notice a white film over the surgical sites. This is completely normal.

**Anti-Oxidant Gel.** At your surgical visit, you will receive AO ProVantage Gel. It is a dental antioxidant that is very soothing and promotes healing. Apply two pumps to the surgical site two times per day the first week after surgery. Avoid eating or drinking for 30 minutes after application of the gel.

**Electric Toothbrushes.** DO NOT use an electric toothbrush for 8 weeks following surgery.

**Waterpik®.** DO NOT use a Waterpik for at least 8 weeks following surgery.

### EATING

**First 24 Hours.** Adequate nutrition is essential for normal healing. Following surgery, your diet should be restricted to cold liquids. Yogurt, smoothies, milkshakes, and dietary supplements such as Instant Breakfast® or Ensure® are good choices. AVOID PEROXIDE, ALCOHOL, CARBONATED BEVERAGES, AND DRINKING THROUGH A STRAW.

**After 24 Hours.** You may have soft foods, such as cooked vegetables, fish, pasta, and meatloaf, which are easily chewed. You should use utensils and avoid chewing at the surgical site for 2 weeks. DO NOT SKIP MEALS. If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort, and heal faster.

### ACTIVITIES

**Rest.** Plan to rest at home for the remainder of the day of surgery and 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 normal daily routine, but avoid strenuous activities such as heavy lifting, or exercise programs which elevate your heart rate for 1 week following surgery.

### MEDICATIONS

Specific medication instructions will be provided during discharge teaching.

Prescribed pain medications should be alternated in specified intervals for best results. PLEASE TAKE THE MEDICATION AS PRESCRIBED. Never take pain medication on an empty stomach. This medication may be repeated every 3 to 4 hours as needed for discomfort. DO NOT USE ASPIRIN or products containing aspirin for 1 week following surgery. Aspirin, Advil®, and Aleve® can contribute to bleeding problems. Only the non-aspirin pain reliever Tylenol® is acceptable, as prescribed by Dr. Stefanuto.

### SWELLING

**Swelling** is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. Your swelling may increase until 3 days post-operatively. This is totally normal. If you experience an increase in swelling beyond the third day or an increase in discomfort, call our office.

**Ice Packs.** To help minimize swelling, we will send you home with ice packs. Place the pack on the outside of your face, over the treated area, for 10 minutes, and then take it off for 10 minutes. Continue to alternate for 10 minutes on, 10 off as much as possible the first 48 hours after surgery during waking hours.

### BLEEDING

Because your graft was placed in a pouch, there will be minimal visible bleeding that will show in your mouth. Sometimes any bleeding in your mouth that mixes with saliva can look like more than it is. If excessive bleeding occurs, please call our office.

### SMOKING

DO NOT SMOKE FOR 8 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY. Smoking is detrimental to healing tissues and will affect the results of surgery. If you can stop smoking for 8 weeks post-operatively, you may as well quit all together.

### SUTURES

We do not use the type of sutures that dissolve by themselves for grafting procedures.

We have used a suture that is non-resorbable. Your sutures will be removed at the 1 month post-op visit. There will be very little sensation associated with suture removal and requires no anesthesia.

Follow up visits are scheduled for: 1 week, 4 weeks, 8 weeks, and 1 year post-op.

If you should have any questions or problems, please call our office anytime. (250) 371-7076