

## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR BONE GRAFTING**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Bone grafting operations are serious surgical procedures. Postoperative care is very important. Careful attention to the following instructions will help prevent complications, minimize discomfort, and promote proper healing.

### **KEEP THE MOUTH CLEAN**

Beginning the day after surgery, rinse gently, using a solution of ½ teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water, 4 times a day. Tooth brushing can resume on the day after surgery. Avoid the areas of surgery, and use a soft toothbrush. As healing progresses, normal brushing techniques may be resumed.

### **BLEEDING**

Gauze pressure is the most effective way to control bleeding. When you leave the office you will most likely be biting on some gauze. The gauze should be left in place for at least 60 minutes before removing it. After 60 minutes, the gauze can be removed and the surgical site inspected. If bleeding continues, replace the gauze with a fresh piece. Be sure to place the gauze properly over the site of bleeding. Leave the gauze in place, under steady pressure, undisturbed for one hour. Resting, with the head elevated on a couple of pillows is also helpful. Do not be alarmed if bleeding does not subside. It is not uncommon to require the use of gauze throughout the day. No smoking, spitting, sucking on straws, or vigorous rinsing for 24 hours. This may cause persistent bleeding or dislodge the blood clot.

### **PAIN**

The local anesthetic wears off in one to three hours. Some form of pain reliever should be taken before the numbness goes away. The doctor will prescribe pain medication. Take this medication as prescribed. You must eat something (soup, yogurt, etc.) with this medication so it does not upset your stomach. Some of the medications can make you groggy and may slow reflexes. Do not drive or operate machinery while on this medication. Do not consume any alcoholic beverages while taking this pain medication. Most discomfort from oral surgery will be gone in a few days. If pain continues beyond the fourth postoperative day, it may require attention and you should call the office.

### **SUTURES**

In most cases dissolvable sutures are used. These sutures will come out on their own in 2 days to 2 weeks.

### **SINUS PRECAUTIONS**

After a procedure involving the maxillary sinus (e.g. sinus lift), it is important that there be no nose blowing for 2 weeks.

**SWELLING**

Swelling is common with oral surgery. It usually takes 48-60 hours for swelling to peak. The use of ice packs to the side of the jaw where the surgery was performed, may help to minimize swelling. The ice pack should be used regularly, 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off for the rest of the day. If surgery was done on both sides of the jaw, it is acceptable to alternate the ice pack from side to side, giving each side 30 minutes. After 36 hours, heat can be applied to the swollen area to speed the reduction of the swelling. Heating pads, hot water bottles, and warm washcloths are all acceptable heat sources. If swelling continues to increase in size after 4 days, it may require attention and you should call the office.

**MEDICATION**

If you have been prescribed an antibiotic, take all of the tablets or liquid as directed. The drug is meant to treat or prevent infection, minimize swelling and discomfort, and promote healing. If you experience any adverse reactions to medications such as nausea, rash, or itching, discontinue the medications and contact the office immediately.

**DISCOLORATION**

You may develop black, blue, green, or yellow discoloration resembling a bruise to the tissue. This is due to a slight oozing of blood beneath the tissue and is of little significance. This is a normal postoperative occurrence and will resolve in a few days to a week.

**DIET**

You may eat anything soft you wish by chewing in an unoperated area. A high calorie, high protein diet is important for rapid healing. Soft nutritious foods such as soft boiled eggs, chopped meats, custards, Jell-O, pudding, thick soups, milk, milk shakes, or a liquid dietary supplement are examples of acceptable foods.

**BONE GRAFTING PROCEDURE**

After bone grafting procedures, it is possible to encounter any one of the following:

- Jaw stiffness: This will resolve in 1 to 2 weeks with healing and increased use of the jaw.
- Numbness: Of the lower lip, tongue, chin, and gum tissue. This is almost always a temporary condition. It may last for a few days or many months. Contact the office if this condition persists for more than 3 days.
- Irritation: Sores or cracking of the lips and corners of the mouth. This is due to chapped lips or stretching of the lips during surgery. It is best treated by keeping the lips well lubricated with a mild ointment.
- Minor nose bleeding.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS**

If you are in doubt about anything, please contact the office during normal business hours. If an emergency exists, call the office and the answering service will direct your call to the doctor.