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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOFT TISSUE GRAFTS

SWELLING/DISCOMFORT

Swelling/discomfort can be minimized by the use of ice/cold packs in 15 minute intervals for 24-48 hours after surgery. Swelling will be present the day after surgery and will usually peak 2-3 days after the surgery. Significant bruising may occur during healing. Some discomfort is expected and is usually controlled with the medications prescribed. The discomfort usually will disappear shortly after the sutures have been removed. You may experience a feeling of slight weakness during the first 48 hours.

BLEEDING

There may be minimal bleeding after the surgery. There may be a red discoloration of the saliva for several hours. If there is considerable bleeding, apply constant pressure to the palate **ONLY** for 10-20 minutes. A moist tea bag may be used to apply pressure. Do not apply pressure to the area where the graft was placed. If there is no change in the amount of bleeding contact the office.

ACTIVITY

After the grafting procedure, relax for the remainder of the day. Keep your head elevated and sleep with extra pillows the first night after surgery. Avoid excessive talking and use caution when sneezing/coughing/yawning; these motions may displace the graft or cause tooth ache like pain. Avoid strenuous activity for several days. Avoid sunbathing, as it may increase swelling and fatigue. Avoid smoking, as it will delay healing and possibly cause failure of the graft. Also avoid alcoholic beverages while taking the prescription medications.

DIET

Warm soft foods can be eaten. Avoid **excessive heat** and spicy, crusty, acidic or seedy types of food. Chewing should be **ONLY** on the side opposite the surgical area. It may be necessary to eat soft foods for several weeks. Avoid biting directly into foods, this will tear or displace the graft. Avoid drinking through a straw, it may stimulate bleeding.

ORAL HYGIENE

It is important to maintain a normal level of oral hygiene in general by brushing and flossing. Do not brush or floss in the surgical area until instructed. Prescribed chlorhexidine rinses may be applied with a cotton ball/swab or by holding the rinse in place for 30-60 seconds. Warm salt water rinses can also be used in the same manner. **DO NOT SWISH WITH ANY RINSES.** This may displace stitches, cause graft failure, and cause tooth ache like pain.

If a dressing is placed it is primarily for your comfort and to protect the surgical area during healing. Should the dressing or a portion of the dressing become loose or come off and there is no discomfort, healing will proceed provided the area is cleaned with the prescribed rinses.

MEDICATIONS

Please follow the instructions for any medication prescribed. If adverse reactions to those medications occur, such as nausea, vomiting, or allergic reactions, please discontinue the medication and contact the office. To avoid medication side effects, such as upset stomach, take medication with food.

FOLLOW UP CARE

Use caution when biting directly into food. Avoid aggressive brushing/flossing in the grafted area.