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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS – SOFT TISSUE SURGERY

Protect the Grafted Site: It is extremely important for the graft to heal undisturbed for the first 5-7 days. Protect the area from movement, physical contact and undue stresses.

Palatal Stent: A thin plastic appliance is sometimes made to cover the top of your mouth where the graft was removed. This stent should remain in place for the first 24 hours. Remove the stent several times a day to rinse your mouth and to clean the stent with warm water. Continue to wear the stent as needed during eating and for your comfort.

Surgical Dressing: Occasionally, a surgical dressing is placed over the grafted site. The surgical dressing acts as a bandage to protect the wound after surgery. The dressing will be removed at the first post-operative visit. If the dressing comes loose before four days after surgery call our office.

Pain: It is best to take the first pain pill before the local anesthetic wears off. Take your pain medicine as prescribed for the first 48 hours after surgery.

Swelling: Ice should be placed to the outside of the face over the surgical area immediately after surgery. An ice pack should be applied for at least 1-2 hours, 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off. This will help to minimize swelling, but some swelling is normal in the first 3-4 days.

Bleeding: The surgical area will normally ooze slightly for the first 1-2 days. This means that your saliva will appear pink or light red. Active bleeding is indicated by bright red blood in your saliva. If this occurs from the top of the mouth, seat the stent or place moistened gauze or a tea bag over the area and apply constant, firm pressure for 15 minutes. If the bleeding occurs from the grafted site, apply constant, firm pressure with an ice pack THROUGH YOUR LIP OR CHEEK for 15 minutes. This normally will stop any bleeding. If active bleeding still occurs call the office.

Antibiotics: Take any antibiotics as prescribed by the doctor.

Food: It is important to eat because nutrition is essential to proper healing. During the first week eat soft foods. Eat nothing hard, crunchy, or with tiny seeds (such as nuts, potato chips, popcorn, and strawberries). Avoid hot and/or spicy foods because these may encourage swelling. Cool, icy drinks will help soothe the mouth as well as help to reduce bleeding and swelling. DO NOT USE A STRAW.

Tobacco and Alcohol: Avoid tobacco and alcohol use for the first few days. These habits dry out the mouth, slow healing and can cause the premature loss of the blood clot from the extraction socket.

Home Care: During the first week, brush and floss all teeth EXCEPT those in the surgical area. Do not attempt to brush the surgical dressing. If the surgical pack prematurely comes off DO NOT brush or floss the area. After the first 24 hours, gently rinse the area with warm salt water. Dissolve 1/8 teaspoon of salt in 8 oz of warm water. Rinse 4-5 times per day especially after eating.

IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS, DO NOT HESITATE TO TELEPHONE THE OFFICE AT ANY TIME. 209-572-6008.