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INSTRUCTIONS TO PATIENTS FOLLOWING SOFT TISSUE GUM GRAFTS

PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

The after effects of periodontal surgery can vary from individual to individual so not all of these instructions may apply. It is very important to keep the surgical area as immobile as possible for the first 72 hours following soft tissue graft surgery. **DO NOT** pull on your lips or try to see the surgical area. If you cough, yawn, or sneeze, cup your hand over the surgical area. Please feel free to call our office any time should you have any questions or are experiencing any unusual symptoms following your surgery.

DISCOMFORT AND MEDICATIONS

You have been given a long acting local anesthetic and it is normal for you to remain numb for several hours following surgery. To minimize discomfort, it is best to start your pain medication prior to the local anesthetic wearing off, approximately one hour after your surgery. If you do not achieve adequate relief, you may take an analgesic such as Tylenol, Advil or Aleve. Taking the pain medication with soft food and plenty of water will lessen any side effects of nausea or upset stomach. Continue to take your pain medication as directed, as long as needed. You were also prescribed an antibiotic that is to be taken daily, as directed, until gone, beginning the day before surgery.

BLEEDING

Some bleeding is normal following periodontal surgery. A gauze sponge may have been placed in the surgical area. To keep pressure on the surgical site, bite down on the gauze for 20 minutes, replace if needed. Blood tinged saliva may be present for 24 hours. In order to avoid potential bleeding problems, you must avoid rinsing vigorously or using a straw for the first 72 hours. Bleeding should not be severe. If bleeding continues, please call our office.

SWELLING OR BRUISING

Swelling is a normal sign of healing and usually reaches its peak in 48 hours. To minimize swelling, ice packs should be placed on the face adjacent to the surgical area. The ice packs should be applied, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off, during the first 24 hours after surgery. After 24 hours, it is usually best to switch from using ice packs to applying moist heat or a heating pad to the area. Tightness of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening the mouth. This may occur for up to 10 days after surgery. If this should occur, apply warm moist heat to the jaw joints as often as possible. Motrin and Aleve are anti-inflammatory and can be taken one every 6-8 hours, as needed for discomfort. Bruising can also occur and usually will fade within 4-7 days

SURGICAL DRESSING

A surgical dressing may have been placed to protect the surgical area. This is a pink, putty like material resembling bubble gum that has been placed around the teeth in the area of surgery and on the roof of the mouth, if a donor site was used. In the recipient area, we would like the dressing to stay until your first postoperative visit. The dressing on the roof of the mouth will normally fall off in the first 48 hours. When this occurs, discard the dressing and begin warm salt water rinses. If the dressing comes off the recipient area, **DO NOT** try to put it back on. Please call the office and we will have you come in to determine if the dressing needs to be replaced.

DIET

Adequate nutrition is essential for healing. It is advisable that the day of surgery you confine your diet to softer foods such as soup, yogurt, pasta, fish, pudding, eggs and mashed potatoes. Drink plenty of water and other liquids. Avoid solid foods or hot liquids the day of surgery. Over the next several days, progress to more solid foods. Return to your normal diet as soon as you feel comfortable. **AVOID** foods with nuts or seeds such as strawberries, raspberries, rye bread or poppy seeds. Also avoid popcorn, French bread or hard rolls.

AVOID SMOKING

Smoking delays the healing process and may cause additional discomfort and complications.

ORAL HYGIENE

Beginning the day after surgery, you may begin to lightly brush the biting surfaces of the teeth in the surgical area. Stay away from the surgical area. **DO NOT** floss or use a proxabrush, electric toothbrush, or water pik in the surgical area. You may have been given chlorhexidine (Peridex) in your postoperative bag. Rinse twice daily until we see you for your first postoperative visit. It is also recommended that you rinse with warm salt water 2-3 times daily. Brush and floss as normal in all other areas of the mouth. Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential!

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you have any questions about your progress or any symptoms you are experiencing, please call our office at 649-7766.