

# INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING BONE GRAFTING

Bone grafting is a routine surgical procedure. However, the after-effects of oral surgery vary per individual. Post-operative care is very important. Unnecessary pain and complications of infection and swelling can be minimized if these instructions are followed carefully.

## IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY

You will notice a small stitches in place where the bone was both taken from and placed.

- The gauze pad placed over the surgical site(s) should be kept in place for a half hour. Soft biting pressure should be maintained with minimal talking or manipulation. After this time, the gauze pad should be removed and discarded. If bleeding persists repeat the process.
- Vigorous mouth rinsing, spitting and drinking through a straw should be avoided. This may initiate bleeding by causing the blood clot that has formed to become dislodged.
- Take the prescribed pain medication as soon as you get home, prior to the local anesthetic (dental freezing) wearing off.
- Restrict your activities the day of surgery. Return home immediately following discharge from the office. Anesthetic effects vary by individual, and you may feel drowsy for a period of time following surgery. Rest, lie down with your head elevated until all the effects of the anesthetic have disappeared.
- Place the ice packs on the sides of your face where the surgery was performed to help reduce swelling.

Swelling, discomfort, bleeding and restricted jaw function are normal and to be expected. They can be minimized with the following instructions.

## BLEEDING

One of the most common concerns after surgery is bleeding. A certain amount of bleeding is to be expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or redness in the saliva is not uncommon. Some oozing is normal for 24-48 hours following surgery and should not cause concern. Excessive or prolonged bleeding may be controlled by:

1. Relax and avoid excitation this increases the heart rate and blood pressure. Sit upright and avoid activity. Also insure that you have adequate pain control using the provided pain medications.
2. First rinse the mouth vigorously with warm water or wipe any old clots from the surgical site with a gauze pad to remove any old blood from your mouth.
3. Place a gauze pad over the surgical site, behind the last molar tooth, and bite firmly, so that your teeth come together, for 30 minutes. Repeat if necessary.
4. If bleeding persists, you can bite on a moisten tea bag for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the tea helps form a clot by contracting bleeding vessels.
5. If excessive bleeding persists longer than 2-3 hours, call the office or 24 hour contact number after hours (1-866-676-2233) for further instructions.

**Do not go to sleep with gauze in your mouth.**

## PAIN

Unfortunately, most surgeries are accompanied by some degree of discomfort. To help reduce your symptoms we advise you to begin taking the pain medications prescribed within 2 hours following your surgery. This ensures that the medication is acting prior to the local anesthetic wearing off, when it may be more difficult to control the pain. Take the anti-inflammatory pain medication as prescribed every 6 hours immediately following surgery and continue for 2-3 days following surgery whether there is discomfort or not. If you feel continued discomfort you can also take the narcotic pain medication as prescribed at the same time as the anti-inflammatory to help reduce any symptoms. The narcotic pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages while taking it. Taking the medication with soft foods and/or a large glass of juice will lessen any side effects of nausea or stomach upset.

## DIET

Following surgery your body requires adequate fluids and nutrition. Begin with 'sugary' liquids (juice, flat pop, milkshakes) when you return home, this will help you 'regain your energy' more quickly and prevent dehydration. At least 5 to 6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily for the first day. Initially, you may feel more comfortable with a softer diet. Avoid foods like nuts, chips or popcorn which may get lodged in the surgical areas. When chewing firmer foods avoid chewing near the surgical site as pressure on the implant during initial healing can result in improper healing. Proper nourishment aids in the healing process. If you are diabetic, maintain your normal diet as much as possible and follow your physician's instructions regarding your insulin schedule.

## ORAL HYGIENE

Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential to reduce pain and lessen the incidence of infection. No rinsing of any kind should be performed until the day following surgery. You can brush your teeth the night of surgery with a small amount of toothpaste or warm, salt water but rinse gently. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 5 to 6 times a day with a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of salt. Avoid using Scope or any commercial mouth rinses as alcohol contained within them slows the healing process.

Sometimes the toothbrush, especially electric toothbrushes, can cause the small screws that affixed the bone in place protrude through the gum tissue. If this happens contact the office for evaluation. Often, this does not require any additional procedures but keeping the area clean is even more important during the healing period.

If the corners of your mouth were dry at the time of surgery they may become cracked or red during healing. You can keep the lips and area moist with an ointment such as Vaseline or Blistex.

## ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics, if prescribed to prevent infection, should be taken as prescribed until finished. It is not uncommon to feel slightly nauseated or itchy when beginning the antibiotics. If you develop a rash or other unfavorable reaction call the office for further information.

If you are currently taking oral contraceptives (Birth Control), for anything other than regulation, you should use an alternate method of birth control for the remainder of this cycle.

## STITCHES

Sutures are placed to minimize bleeding and to help with healing. They will dissolve on their own within a week. Sometimes they become dislodged early with cleaning or food. This is no cause for alarm. Contact Dr. Mather's office for instructions and to make an appointment for evaluation but typically the site will gradually fill in with new tissue over the next 3 to 4 weeks. It is important to keep the area clean with gentle rinsing with warm salt water.

## PROSTHESIS

Partial dentures, 'flippers', or full dentures should not be used immediately after surgery. Resume using your prosthesis once after Dr. Mather instructs you that it is alright to do so, or you have had a follow-up visit with your restoring dentist and they have instructed you that it is alright to begin wearing your temporary denture. It is important to the healing process of the bone graft that there is little to no contact between the temporary prosthesis and the grafted bone ensure proper healing.

Your case is individual. No two mouths are alike. It is my desire that your recovery be as smooth and easy as possible. If you have any questions about your progress or any symptoms you are experiencing, please call the office at 780.760.1501 during the regular office hours or evenings and weekends at 1-866-676-2233 to obtain advice and, if necessary, organize an additional appointment.