

- AVOID AREA** Regardless of the type of procedure please **DO NOT feel the surgery site with your tongue, pull your lip down to see and check the area, or use your hands to rub the area on the outside of your cheek for the next 2 weeks.** Any movement to the surgery site could jeopardize the initial healing process and cause ongoing complications. It is very important to not disturb the region for the entire two weeks allowing excellent healing to take place. **The better you do staying away from the site the better the healing.**
- SWELLING** Swelling of the face is not unusual following dental procedures. This is a normal response and should not cause you alarm. The amount of swelling varies with every patient and with each surgery. **Swelling will peak on the 3rd and 4th day after surgery. Expect lots of swelling for gum grafts.**
- Reducing swelling is necessary for proper healing. Swelling can be reduced by:
- 1) **Restricting physical activity for the first 7 days** following your procedure (any activity which raises your blood pressure or heart rate should be eliminated).
 - 2) **Applying ice packs** over the affected areas during the first day (15 minutes on, 15 minutes off, or alternating sides). Again, swelling may be greatest on the 3rd or 4th day and should slowly subside thereafter.
 - 3) **Sleep with your head elevated** the first couple nights.
 - 4) **Staying out of the heat.** Try to stay cool and indoors during hot days in addition to staying out of hot tubs/saunas or taking long hot showers.
 - 5) **Taking 600 mg Motrin** (Ibuprofen/Advil) every 6 hours for the first 3 days.
- DISCOMFORT** Some soreness/discomfort may develop when the anesthetic (numbing) wears off. It is always easier to stay ahead of the pain than trying to catch up. **Start taking your pain medication before the anesthetic completely wears off.** Motrin should be taken every 6 hours to help minimize the discomfort and swelling. In addition, you can take the narcotic, either Tylenol #3, hydrocodone and acetaminophen (Vicodin), OR oxycodone and acetaminophen (Percocet), every 4-6 hours for break through pain. For the first day it is recommended to alternate the pain medications every 3 hours. For example, if you take the Motrin at noon, take the narcotic at 3 pm, then take the Motrin at 6 pm, then take the narcotic at 9 pm, etc... **Always take the medications with food as the narcotics (and ABX) can cause nausea and vomiting.** If you cannot or prefer not to take the narcotic you can substitute the narcotic out for 1-2 extra strength Tylenols (500 mg acetaminophen). *Do not* take both the narcotic and Tylenol/acetaminophen together as they both contain similar ingredients; this would be unsafe and dangerous. Take one or the other.
- MEDICATIONS** **All medications prescribed should be taken according to directions.** Narcotic pain medications should not be mixed with alcohol, tranquilizers, or sleeping pills. **(ABX were provided / ABX were NOT indicated for your case) Antibiotics should be taken until gone even if you feel better prior to finishing the prescription.** If itching, rash, or diarrhea develops, discontinue any further use of medication and call the office. Antibiotics have been shown to possibly decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills. Please use another form of contraceptive if necessary.
- BLEEDING** Slight bleeding for as much as 48 hours is normal, and will turn your saliva red. An old pillowcase is recommended the first night following surgery. If bleeding does occur place a damp gauze on the region bleeding and **apply pressure for 15 minutes.** This will seem like a long time so set a timer to help accuracy. **The amount of pressure used with you finger (for example), should be enough that your finger should be fatigued and tired by the time 15 minutes is up.** If this does not stop the bleeding, **relocate the pressure** to another region close by and apply pressure with a new piece of damp gauze. The key to success is pressure in the correct position. If bleeding does not stop after pressure, this means the pressure was not focused in the right area. **LIVER CLOTS:** At times you may have a large clot (red jelly material) over the teeth near the

surgery site. If this occurs, do not be alarmed, this is normal. You can use a damp gauze to gently wipe it off. If bleeding persists, apply pressure as instructed above.

HYGIENE

Do not brush your teeth (anywhere OR in the area where surgery occurred). Starting 24 hours from the time of surgery, rinse 4 times per day with the chlorhexidine rinse. Rinse using 1-2 tablespoons at a time. **Place Chlorhexidine into your mouth and gently moving your head left, right, front and back to allow the mouth rinse to move through your mouth. NO SWISHING FOR THE ENTIRE TWO WEEKS.** When finished, lean your head forward over a sink and let the mouth rinse drool out. **NO SPITTING FOR THE ENTIRE TWO WEEKS.** Chlorhexidine is our rinse to help minimize the plaque formation around the teeth. You may notice some stain beginning to form on your teeth prior to your next appointment, that is normal. It will come off once you are given instructions of how to brush. Discontinue any other rinses you are using for the next 14 days unless otherwise specified. If instructed, regions that have not be worked on, opposite to the surgery site for example, may be brushed as usual with normal toothpaste. **Keep in mind, when you have toothpaste in your mouth you must "drool" it out as the NO SPITTING for two weeks still applies.**

SMOKING

Smoking must be at a **zero** for a gum graft to be successful. **ANY** smoking will adversely affect healing and may increase pain and or cause the procedure to fail.

DIET

It is very important to stay well hydrated and nourished during the healing process. The patient who maintains a good diet of soft cool foods generally feels better, has less discomfort, and heals faster. Please see the diet recommendations below.

SUTURES

Your sutures will be removed 4 weeks after surgery (AND/OR they will all dissolve by themselves). There are several different types of suture in the mouth. The sutures in the palate will eventually hang down and will fall out on their own. This takes about one week and is completely normal. No matter what, **leave everything alone the best you can.** Non-dissolving sutures will be removed by an assistant at **4 weeks** from your procedure. Continue to rinse as keep the area clean as instructed as it is easier to remove clean sutures as opposed to one covered in plaque.

DIET INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A **soft cool food diet** (scrambled eggs texture or softer) is very important to avoid traumatizing the surgical area and/or pulling the sutures. **When deciding on what to eat for your soft diet always error on the side of caution.**

For the first 1-2 days cold foods are recommended to help reducing swelling and discomfort. From Day 3 on, room temperature foods are recommended until two weeks.

A diet rich in protein is suggested to help healing.

If needed (after the first 24 hours) you can rinse after meals (following the strict instructions above) with chlorhexidine or with salt water to wash away any food debris

EXTRA SOFT FOOD IDEAS FOR THE FIRST WEEK

Ice cream, malts or shakes, chocolate milk, yogurt, smoothies (avoid strawberries and other fruits with small seeds), fruit juice, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, grits, broth, creamy soups with no large chunks or noodles, pudding, Jell-O, extra ripe banana, eggnog, applesauce, protein shakes, etc.

SOFT FOOD IDEAS FOR THE SECOND WEEK

Soups with soft noodles, well-cooked beans, well-cooked pastas, avocado slices, very soft cooked vegetables (no broccoli) cooked rice, soft cake...

DONTS for the ENTIRE TWO WEEKS

No straws

No crunchy or sharp foods (i.e. seeds, nuts, chips, popcorn, etc)

No chewing gum: Avoid spicy & hot foods

No sticky foods like peanut butter