



# Free Gingival Graft Post-Op Instructions

## Rest

You should take some time to rest after the surgery in order to promote healing. In the day following the procedure, limit your physical activity and rest with your head elevated above your heart. When you get up from a reclining position, do so slowly in order to prevent dizziness.

## Ice

Using an ice pack in the first 24-48 hours following the surgery can help to reduce discomfort and swelling. We suggest that you apply the ice pack to your face 10 minutes on and then 10 minutes off. You may want to try using moist heat on the third day following the procedure.

## Medication

Pain medication should be taken before the local anesthetic wears off; you may even want to take some immediately following the surgery. If pain medication wears off before it is time to take more, then you can alternate it with Ibuprofen every two hours. Remember that adults should not take more than 800 mg of Ibuprofen three times a day. Because some pain medications cause lightheadedness, we suggest that you lie down after taking it. We also suggest taking medication with food since it can cause an upset stomach. If an antibiotic was prescribed, then take it as directed until it is ALL GONE, even if you show no signs of infection.

## Mouthcare

The formation of a blood clot in the surgical site is important for healing. The clot should not be disturbed, so you should avoid rinsing, spitting, or drinking with a straw in the 24 hours following a procedure. You should not brush your teeth at this time either. You may brush in NON-SURGICAL areas in the day after the surgery. If we prescribe a rinse for you to use, follow the instructions and make sure you rinse gently. Do not pull away your lip to view the graft site and do not touch the area for the first week after the surgery. Doing so may dislodge the blood clot and disturb the healing tissue, compromising the success of the surgery.



## **Eating**

You should eat softer foods after the surgery such as pasta, eggs, yogurt, and mashed potatoes. Avoid foods that are hot, cold, acidic, chewy, or sharp, because these can irritate the surgical site. Also try to maintain a balanced diet in order to promote healing.

## **Fluids**

We recommend drinking a lot of fluids after the surgery, drinking 6-8 glasses of water in the day immediately following the procedure. Do not use a straw because it can create suction that may dislodge the blood clot, which can result in excess bleeding.

## **Bleeding**

You will experience some oozing and bleeding after a procedure, but it should not be excessive. If heavier bleeding does occur, then apply pressure to the area with a gauze pad or moistened tea bag for 20 minutes. If the bleeding persists, call our office at 617-934-4952.

The graft will change in appearance during the healing process. Over the next few weeks, it will turn a white color and then a pink one.

## **Alcohol**

DO NOT CONSUME ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION.

## **Swelling**

Swelling is normal after a surgical procedure, but if it does not reduce after a couple of days, seems excessive, or is accompanied by fever, then call our office at 617-934-4952.

## **Smoking**

We ask that you DO NOT SMOKE after the surgery. Smoking can slow healing, cause discomfort, and may increase bleeding and your risk for infection.