

# Post-operative Instructions: Gum Graft

## ➤ Right After Surgery

- The key for a successful graft is that it does not move around. This allows tiny blood vessels to grow into the graft and bring it back to life. Avoid pulling on your lip or otherwise disturbing the graft until it heals.
- Please do not smoke after surgery! It delays wound healing and increases the risk that your procedure may fail. Alcohol consumption should be minimized, especially if you are taking Tylenol(acetaminophen) as part of your pain control regimen.
- Cold packs applied to face with steady pressure will decrease swelling and pain. Apply 15 min on, 15 min off.
- Rest and light exercise are good, but avoid heavy exertion and keep your head elevated to minimize bleeding and swelling.
- It is very tempting to play with suture tails with your tongue. Leave the stitches alone so they do not fall out too early.

## ➤ Medications

- To manage pain & swelling take ibuprofen 600mg + 500mg acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 4-5hr, unless you have a medical reason you cannot take NSAIDs.
- If you were prescribed a rescue opioid, take as needed without changing the Tylenol/ibuprofen regimen.
- Maximum daily dose: Do NOT exceed total of 3,200 mg Tylenol or Ibuprofen per 24hr to avoid organ damage.

## ➤ Diet

- Soft foods - Avoid hard or crunchy foods (popcorn, chips, cereal, candy, seeds, nuts, etc.).
- Balanced nutrition is important for good recovery. What can you eat?
- Smoothies, soups, oatmeal, yogurt, eggs, tofu, soft meatloaf, soft noodles, mashed potatoes, hummus, cottage cheese, boneless/soft fish, avocado, bananas, applesauce, soft ice cream, etc.
- Stay hydrated after surgery. Avoid very hot liquids. Warm is OK. Avoid sucking through a straw the first few days.

## ➤ Oral Hygiene

- Continue to brush and clean between the teeth but avoid the surgical area until your follow-up appointment.
- Gently swish with the chlorhexidine rinse for 30-60 sec AFTER brushing, then spit. Then don't eat for at least 30 min.
- Please continue your professional maintenance program uninterrupted. Your hygienist will be careful with the surgical site. The rest of your mouth still needs the regular professional cleaning

## ➤ You May Experience

- Some swelling and bruising. Even light bleeding mixes with saliva and looks like more blood. You may want to cover your pillow with a towel the first night. A little bleeding is normal. If you have heavy bleeding from the palate, hold pressure with a wet gauze or paper towel. Holding pressure with a wet tea bag (black) can also accelerate blood clot formation. Call Dr. Tullis if you have heavy bleeding that does not stop after holding pressure.

For further questions, call Dr. Tullis at (719) 475-9023 (business hrs). Your take-home packet has Dr. Tullis' cell number in case of emergencies.