

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING GINGIVAL GRAFTING

General Care: The most important healing occurs during the first week. Remember that surgery was done, and be as careful and gentle with the surgical site as possible.

Blood and Bleeding: Blood in the saliva after surgery is normal. In general, this will lead to pink or red saliva. If bleeding is excessive, sit upright and still, and place gentle pressure against the area of bleeding. Do not create more pressure by trying to spit the blood out. Either soak with gauze or lean over a sink and let the fluid drop out of your mouth. If bleeding does not slow down within 30 minutes, please call the office at **(831)-688-1975**.

Pain: Following gingival grafting surgery, pain is expected. If the palate was used as a donor site, this is often the more painful surgical site. There is a wide range of pain responses to surgery, and doctor will prescribe pain medications to help. In general, pain is not severe after these procedures. If these medicines do not control the pain, or if pain increases after the fifth day, please call the office. If you are compliant with the prescribed pain management protocol it is very helpful.

Swelling: Swelling in the area of surgery is expected, and normal. Sometimes the swelling is delayed and starts on the second or third day. It will usually max at day 2-5, then slowly decrease. There may be some bruising along with swelling. Ice packs applied over the affected area of the face (20 minutes on, 20 minutes off) are helpful, but only on the day of surgery. Icing on the day of surgery is critical to reduce swelling on day 2-3.

Oral Hygiene: The operated area(s) cannot be brushed or flossed during the first two weeks. Teeth that were not operated on can be brushed and flossed but be careful not to accidentally bump the operated areas. Error on the side of caution, we will clean the teeth at the post-op appointment. If prescription mouthwash (Stellalife) was prescribed, please rinse twice a day for 1-2 minutes starting the evening of surgery (see box for instructions). Avoid forcefully spitting the rinse out of your mouth, instead lean over the sink and let the rinse gently drop out of your mouth.

Palatal stent (clear retainer): **Please wear the stent continuously for 24 hours.** You may eat and drink with it in place. After 24 hours, you may remove the stent to brush/floss/rinse the non-operated teeth. Reinsert the stent immediately. **Continue to wear the stent as much as possible for the first 7 to 10 days following surgery.**

Exercise: Limit vigorous exercise for at least 5 days as this will increase blood pressure and may cause more bleeding and swelling in the surgical site. After day 5 you may ease back into exercising. If you begin exercising and there is throbbing from the surgical site please reduce your activity or stop completely.

Eating: Restrict your diet to liquids until the local anesthetic wears off. Thereafter, you will want to eat soft foods (such as rice, pasta, or eggs) for about a week. You can chew normally on non-operated teeth. The first week is where critical healing occurs. As a basic rule do everything you can to avoid chewing with teeth that were operated on until you see the doctor for a post-operative visit.

Sutures: Sutures will be placed in the area of the surgery. Try your best not to disturb the sutures with your tongue. The sutures on grafted teeth are preferred to stay in for 2-4 weeks, depending on the procedure. If they



Jordan Richert DMD, MS, MPH

Diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology

become bothersome, they can be removed. The palatal sutures are removed at 2 weeks. They often become loose and can “dangle.” If this is bothersome, please call the office and we will arrange to remove them earlier.

Appearance: Remember that the purpose of this procedure is to thicken the gum, and not to cover a significant amount of the root. The graft will appear low on the teeth. The outer layer of the graft will turn a whitish color at some point during the first week. Underneath the white layer will be a reddish pink color. This is normal.

EMERGENCIES: If it is after hours and you need to speak with Dr. Richert, please call **(831) 688-1975** and the answering service will connect you.