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**Tissue Graft Post-Operative Instructions**

Do NOT eat anything until the anesthesia wears off, as you might bite your lips, cheek, or tongue and cause damage. You will probably have some discomfort when the anesthesia wears off; take your non-aspirin pain medications as directed, whether it is prescribed or over-the-counter.

SWELLING: You can apply icepacks to your face near the graft sites but freezing the graft may reduce blood flow and reduce the grafts chance for survival. After 48 hours, a heating pad or moist heat may be used to decrease swelling. When using heat, apply 20 to 30 minutes of each hour. It is also beneficial to take the anti-inflammatory medication IBUPROFEN or ALEVE and to sleep with your head elevated to reduce swelling. If swelling persists after several days and is resolving, contact Dr. Sioda for instructions.

BLEEDING: Minor bleeding, such as a pinkish tinge to your saliva, may occur during the first 48 hours following surgery. Avoid extremely hot foods for the rest of the day and DO NOT rise out your mouth, as these will often prolong the bleeding. If bleeding continues, apply light pressure to the area with a moistened gauze or moistened tea bag. Keep in place for 20-30 minutes without looking to see if the bleeding has stopped (NO PEEKING!). If bleeding increases or occurs past the initial 48 hours, please call our office as soon as possible to notify the doctor and receive further instructions. Avoid any strenuous physical activity for the next 2-3 days to prevent or minimize severe bleeding.

HOMECARE: Maintain normal oral hygiene measures in the areas of your mouth not affected by the surgery. In areas where there is dressing, lightly brush only the biting surfaces of the teeth. The sutures may be dissolved by the time you return for your first post-operative visit. However, sutures are often used that are removed several weeks after healing. Do not play with the surgery area with your fingers or tongue. DO NOT PULL UP OR DOWN THE LIP OR CHEEK TO LOOK AT THE AREA OR HAVE SOMEONE ELSE LOOK AT THE AREA!

NUTRITION: Please follow a soft food diet, taking care to avoid the surgical site(s) when chewing. Chew on the opposite side and DO NOT bite into food if the procedure was done in the front of the mouth. Avoid sticky, hard (such as ice cubes, nuts, popcorn, chips), brittle, spicy, highly seasoned, hot, or acidic foods in your diet. Food such as soups, pasta, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, and instant breakfasts (such as Ensure). Do not drink liquids through a straw. Be sure to maintain adequate nutrition and drink plenty of fluids. **Avoid alcohol and smoking until after your post-operative appointment.**

HEALING: Different types of gum grafts heal at different rates. Your graft may appear red and inflamed and have some mild swelling. These are normal and should not be of concern. It is common for superficial parts of a graft to appear white in color. Usually, the donor site on the side of the palate presents the most inconvenience during healing.

***Try to relax and practice the best oral hygiene possible and your healing should progress well. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at 253-759-7941.***