



## Instructions For Patients After Soft Tissue Graft Procedures

**If you have any questions, please call the office. The doctors can be reached at any time.**

A CENTER FOR PERIODONTAL  
SPECIALTY CARE AND DENTAL IMPLANTS

777 WELCH RD., SUITE N  
PALO ALTO, CA

650 / 321-3443

### **PAIN**

Most patients experience soreness and aching of the palate or graft site for 7-10 days. The discomfort usually peaks 3-4 days after treatment. Much of the pain can be avoided by controlling swelling. An anti-inflammatory/analgesic drug such as Ibuprofen should be taken regularly every 4-6 hours up to a maximum of 3200mg./day. Additionally, a narcotic analgesic such as Tylenol with Codeine can be added to the Ibuprofen during periods of pain or at night. The narcotic produces drowsiness, do not drive or work around dangerous machinery while under its influence. Take the medication with small amounts of food to reduce stomach upset.

### **SWELLING**

In some cases, localized swelling is to be expected. To minimize swelling, apply an ice pack to the face over the treated area immediately after surgery. Continue with the ice pack on for 10 min. then off 10 min. for several hours. If an anti-inflammatory medication has been prescribed, please take as directed. Once the swelling has peaked apply moist heat to the outside of the face by using a hot water bottle, steamed towel or heating pad. Also, begin, at that point, rinsing gently several times a day with salt water.

### **PALATAL PROTECTION**

A plastic palatal protector is usually inserted immediately following the graft procedure and is to stay in place for 24 hours. After 24 hours, remove the protector and rinse your mouth gently. A thin bandage may be present under the protector to control initial bleeding. If this bandage comes loose or falls out when the protector is removed, discard it. The protector is for your comfort as it protects the palate from the tongue and from food during chewing. Please wear the protector for at least 3-4 days, after which time you may wear it as much as you like during the first week. Remove it frequently, rinse your mouth and brush your teeth staying away from the graft.

### **BLEEDING**

You may notice oozing for 24-48 hours after surgery, however, episodes of bleeding may occur within the first week of healing. If you experience heavy bleeding, attempt to locate the source and apply gentle but firm pressure for at least five minutes. If the bleeding is from the palate, leave the protector in and apply pressure to the roof of the mouth with your finger. If bleeding occurs while the protector is out, replace it and apply pressure.

### **NUTRITION**

Eat adequately to maintain nutrition and energy level. Choose soft foods which require minimal chewing. If you have smoothies or milkshakes, eat from a spoon not a straw, to avoid putting pressure on the sutures. Drink lots of liquids. Avoid hard, hot or spicy foods. If possible, chew food on the untreated side of the mouth. Food supplement drinks are available at drug stores and should be used if you cannot eat regular food.

### **ORAL HYGIENE**

Meticulous oral hygiene should be continued in all areas of the mouth. In the area(s) of surgery, brush your teeth gently and stay away from the graft and palatal areas during the first week. After 24 hours, rinse several times a day with warm salt water (approx. 1/2 teaspoon salt in an 8 oz. glass of water). If Peridex rinse has been prescribed, please use as directed after brushing. In general, the cleaner the mouth is maintained the better the healing response.

### **ACTIVITY LEVEL**

Many patients return to work the day following surgery. However, we recommend that you avoid strenuous physical activity for the first 48 hours. Keep your head elevated and avoid bending over with your head below your waist. Get plenty of rest and sleep. In general, plan on taking it easy for the first several days after surgery.