

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRAFTING PROCEDURES**

1. **Do not** rinse, spit, brush, floss or use a straw the day the graft is completed.
2. **Do not** pull your lip out to check the graft area.
3. Use ice over the surgical area for the first 24 hours (**20 minutes on, 20 off**). After 24 hours, use moist heat (i.e., hand towel under hot water). Drink ice-cold or refrigerated water throughout the day.
4. Thoroughly clean teeth **not involved** in the surgery in your usual manner everyday. A new toothbrush is recommended.
5. Exercise such as jogging, swimming and tennis should be discontinued for 7-10 days after surgery. This is to prevent damage to delicate new blood vessels growing into the graft tissue. Excessive movement of, or pressure on the lips and cheeks should be avoided as well (blowing up balloons, etc.)
6. Your graft will usually be sutured with dissolvable sutures, which will dissolve on their own. Please try to keep your tongue from playing with the stitches that hold the graft in place. If stitches come loose, do not pull them out--you could pull the graft off.
7. Never remove any tissue from the graft area. A healthy, healing graft can look very bad at one or two weeks post-operatively.
8. The dressing (if used) over the grafted site where the tissue was placed, is intended to remain until the first post-operative visit and should not be disturbed. If it comes loose, do not try to put it back in place. Instead, carefully remove it. Do not attempt to cleanse or medicate the graft in any way.
9. Occasionally, some post-operative bleeding may occur from the donor site at the roof of your mouth. Repeated rinsing will only make the problem worse. Usually, a small amount of bleeding can be controlled by applying pressure on the palate with moistened gauze or a moistened tea bag. If bleeding persists, call our office.
10. There will likely be a dressing or an acrylic "retainer" over the area where the graft was taken from the palate. Please keep this in place for at least 48 hours without removing it. After 48 hours, you may remove the retainer to cleanse it, and the palate may be cleansed gently with salt water or a medicated mouth rinse. (1/2 tsp. salt to 8 oz. glass of water)
11. Please try to eat and sleep with the retainer in place - it will be much more comfortable for you.
12. When eating, avoid dishes that require you to bite off, or bite into food with your front teeth, until we tell you it is safe to do so. Cut meats and vegetables into small bites and place carefully in the mouth with a fork or spoon. Soft, cold foods are best during the first several hours after surgery. Avoid hard and crunchy foods (chips, snack foods, etc.) and alcohol for one week.
13. Avoid smoking for 24 hours after surgery. Thereafter, limit smoking as much as possible until your first post-operative visit. Better yet, use this as an excuse to try quitting entirely.
14. Take your analgesic pain pills as needed. We hope the healing phase of the procedure progresses smoothly.

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