

SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

Surgical dressing

A surgical dressing may be placed over the surgical site following some procedures. Do not eat or drink anything warm for the next 6-8 hours as this may soften the dressing. The dressing will be removed when you return for your next appointment. It is not uncommon for dressings to become dislodged. This is no cause for alarm. If only part of the dressing comes off, do not try to remove the remaining part. **If part of the dressing is dislodged, do not try to replace it on the area yourself, you will disturb the healing process.**

Stent/Shield

A thin plastic shield (also known as a stent) may be provided after gingival grafting. This shield will protect the top of the mouth during healing. The stent should be worn at all times, especially while eating or sleeping. When rinsing with mouth rinse, please remove the stent. Before removing the stent, wash and rinse your hands thoroughly with an antibacterial soap such as *Dial*. After washing, dry your hands with paper towels (not the cloth towels used by the rest of the family). These precautions will help prevent postoperative infections. Before re-inserting the shield, please clean and rinse it with mouth rinse or warm water.

Cleaning your teeth

Do not clean your teeth or gums in the area of surgery for **two weeks**. The rest of the teeth may be brushed as usual. When brushing, do not pull the lip or cheek out as this may cause serious damage to the surgical site. After brushing, gently rinse with warm salt water for at least 30 seconds (and preferably a minute or so). Do not touch the measuring cap of the bottle to your lips, use a separate cup or glass instead. Some mild staining of the teeth may occur and you will probably notice a medicine taste in your mouth when using the rinse.

Swelling/Bruising

Some swelling is common following periodontal procedures. Please do not use ice to control the swelling, as this will result in less blood getting to the surgical site. This could cause serious problems, particularly if grafting has been done. Although swelling is normal the first couple of days after procedures, if any additional swelling occurs please let us know.

Discomfort

You can expect some discomfort for a week or so. The following medications will help make you more comfortable:

Ibuprofen: This is a very effective pain reliever when taken on a regular dosing schedule. Double blind studies have shown that ibuprofen is often more effective than pain relievers such as codeine. I recommend that **600mg** (3 over-the-counter **200mg** tablets) be taken at 8:00am, 12:00pm, 4:00pm, and 8:00pm (every 4-6 hours as needed for pain). It is best taken with food. The most common side effect is a heartburn type of indigestion, which may usually be avoided by taking the medicine with food or with an antacid.

Narcotics: This medication should be taken only if the ibuprofen does not control the discomfort. You should: 1) take the medication only if needed, 2) start with the lowest dose that will control the discomfort (one tablet), and 3) minimize activity. Moving around too much may cause nausea. This medication may make you drowsy and slow your reflexes. For this reason, you should not operate a car or other dangerous equipment when taking it. **Do not** consume **alcohol** when taking this medication.

Eating

Eat a soft diet for the first week or so. Foods to avoid include: 1) hard foods (such as chips), 2) hot or spicy food (such as salsa dip) and 3) popcorn. There are many foods that you can eat, including milkshakes, soups, pasta dishes (if not spicy), and dietary supplements such as *Boost* or *Carnation Instant*

Breakfast. You should drink plenty of fluids. It may be desirable to take a vitamin supplement such as *Stresstabs* or *Centrum* for a month or so following the procedure.

Activities

You will need to restrict your activities for 24hours.. **Avoid** unnecessary exertion (aerobic exercise, yard work, sports, swimming), smoking, alcoholic beverages, mouth rinses (other than *Peridex*), playing wind instruments, close contact with pets or animals, vigorous rinsing, **pulling the lip or cheek out** to clean the teeth or inspect the surgical site. **Do not** put your hands in your mouth for any reason.

Sutures

I normally use resorbable sutures which dissolve and do not require removal. It is common for such sutures to begin to dissolve early in the healing process, sometimes as early as the first day or two. If any sutures feel loose, please do not attempt to remove them. Leave them alone and they will dissolve by themselves.

Bleeding

Bleeding is common following periodontal procedures, especially grafting. It can be minimized by elevating your head with an additional pillow when sleeping and minimizing activity. A small amount of bleeding is normal after anesthetic.

Antibiotics

If I have given you an antibiotic, **please take it until gone**. If you have any problems (such as a rash or itching), please contact me immediately. Some antibiotics commonly cause yeast infections in women, if this occurs please contact your gynecologist. Others may cause nausea/upset stomach or increased susceptibility to sunburn. Some antibiotics interfere with the action of birth control pills, which may lead to unplanned pregnancies.

If an extraction has occurred:

No smoking, straws, or any suction at all. This can cause the blood clot to dislodge and a dry socket to occur.

Questions

If you have any questions or experience any problems, please call me at one of the following numbers:

- 1) 864-223-0543 (Office)
- 2) 864-554-7721 (Cell)

Thank you,

Aaron Carner, DMD, MS