

Austin Periodontal Associates: POST-OPERATIVE CARE FOLLOWING TISSUE GRAFTING

Proper care of your mouth following periodontal surgery is very important for the healing process.

Each person responds differently and the post-operative discomfort, swelling, and bleeding will vary.

Please follow these instructions carefully to increase healing, comfort, and ensure a successful outcome.

Diet: Please eat soft foods during the first week and do not eat on the area surgery was performed. It's important that you maintain an adequate and nutritious diet during recovery. To prevent an upset stomach, you should always keep some food in your stomach while taking the prescribed medications. Patients who maintain a high protein diet and drink water generally feel better, have less discomfort and heal faster. Supplementation with a multivitamin may be beneficial to healing. After the first week you can gradually return to a normal diet, continuing to avoid eating on the area surgery was performed (soft diet if full mouth surgery was performed). Avoid hard, fibrous, or sharp foods as they may delay the healing (especially seeds, chips, nuts, and popcorn). It is ok to have coffee post surgically but it should not be extremely hot. Iced beverages would be preferable. Carbonated beverages are also acceptable. Gently (low pressure/minimal force) using a large straw with liquids is also acceptable.

PROBIOTICS – Probiotics may prevent and relieve some of the common side effects of antibiotics such as nausea, upset stomach, and diarrhea. Probiotics are considered safe and are naturally contained in products such as yogurt. We recommend taking probiotics while you are taking oral antibiotics. Probiotic foods (Yogurt, Kefir, Kombucha) may help decrease gastrointestinal problems. Probiotics are also available over-the-counter, come in several forms, and can be purchased at your local pharmacy or supermarket. They should be taken at least 2 hours before taking antibiotic medications. It is important that you notify your doctor if you experience side effects of antibiotics as this may be a sign of serious conditions that may require medical attention.

Swelling/Bruising: Swelling is the body's natural response to injury. Swelling and bruising are common after surgical procedures and can vary dramatically from patient to patient. It can be difficult to predict exactly how much swelling or bruising a patient will experience during recovery. These differences can be related to genetics, overall health/diet, and the type of surgery performed. Swelling is typically greatest 2-3 days after surgery and then will reduce. During the first 24 hours after surgery gently place an ice pack on the outside of the face (20 minutes on then off) to help minimize swelling. Keep your head elevated above the level of your heart during the first 24 hours. Two days after surgery, moist heat will help resolve minor swelling.

Bleeding: Some "oozing" or light bleeding with discoloration of saliva is normal after surgery. If there is excessive bleeding apply damp gauze with firm, continuous pressure on the surgical site for 20 minutes. Sit and keep your head elevated. If needed, saturate a tea bag with water and bite on it with continuous pressure until the bleeding stops. If bleeding persists, call our office. Patients taking aspirin may experience post-operative bleeding and bruising. In some cases, the bruising may be significant. However, the risk of stopping antiplatelet therapy and predisposing the patient to thromboembolic events overweighs the minimal risk of bleeding from dental procedures.

Oral Hygiene: It is important to start cleaning your mouth as soon as possible to ensure proper healing. Please thoroughly brush and floss the UNTREATED areas. Please do not brush or floss the TREATED areas. The exposed operated areas should NOT be swabbed with a Q-tip (cotton tipped applicator). Please leave the surgical site completely undisturbed. A continued regimen of careful home care will promote healing. Do not pull away your lip to view the graft site and do not touch the area for the first week after the surgery. Doing so may dislodge the blood clot and disturb the healing tissue, compromising the success of the surgery. Avoid sleeping/laying on the side of the affected area.

Mouth Rinsing: Do not swish. Swishing will cause movement and may damage the surgical area. You can use salt water to gently rinse your mouth. A prescription mouth rinse (Peridex, Periogard, or Chlorhexidine) is not required for soft tissue surgery.

Smoking: DO NOT smoke after surgery (minimum 7 days). Smoking interferes with healing and makes the results less predictable.

Sutures: Sutures may dissolve over the first 5-7 days or they may be removed at your follow-up appointment. Do not pull on your lip to look at the surgical site. Do not play with the sutures with your tongue. Do not cut out any loose sutures. Please call the office and any issues can be addressed promptly.

Palatal Stent: If tissue was taken from the palate, a stent that covers the roof of the mouth may be placed. This stent is to be worn continuously for the first 24 hours after surgery. After that day, the stent is only recommended to be worn while eating.

Exercise: Please go home and rest. Sedentary activity is encouraged for the first 48 hours after surgery. Limit intense physical activity for the week following surgery. Strenuous activity may increase swelling. High impact activities may cause movement to surgical site and delay or prevent healing. Generally, during the first week activities that can be performed at a conversational pace are acceptable. Conversational pace is an easy pace in which you can still comfortably hold a conversation.

Alcohol: Modest alcohol use doesn't reduce the effectiveness of most antibiotics. But alcohol suppresses your immune system and interferes with the essential processes like sleep and hydration, which are critical to recovering from surgery. We recommend avoiding alcohol until you finish your antibiotics and are feeling better.

Post-operative Medications and Pain Management

You will be given a prescription for medication to help you tolerate pain during the post-surgical recovery period. A long-acting local anesthetic is administered during your surgery. The numbness from the anesthetic lasts from 4-8 hours. We recommend you start taking Ibuprofen and acetaminophen while you are still numb. It is common to have discomfort for at least the first week following your surgical procedure. Please take your medications as directed. Please do not take pain medication on an empty stomach as nausea may result.

Pain management with Ibuprofen and acetaminophen has been proven to be more effective than narcotic pain relievers. Narcotic medications can be provided upon request but should generally be reserved for patients who have failed to manage their pain with the Ibuprofen and acetaminophen.

We advise taking 600-800 mg of Ibuprofen (3-4 of 200mg Advil or Motrin) within 1 hour after dental surgery (and continue taking 600-800 mg of ibuprofen every 6 hours) and then 3 hours later after initial dose of ibuprofen, take 1000 mg of Acetaminophen (Extra strength Tylenol). Continue this regimen of alternating ibuprofen and acetaminophen as explained above for the first 48 hours after your procedure. Alternatively, Ibuprofen and acetaminophen can be taken at the same time if alternating is not managing the discomfort. **Do NOT exceed 3200 mg of ibuprofen in 24-hour period and Do NOT exceed 3000 mg of acetaminophen in a 24-hour period.**

Note: When taking any prescribed medication containing Acetaminophen (Tylenol), i.e.: Percocet, Hydrocodone, Vicoden or Tylenol with Codeine, you should NOT take additional Tylenol so as not to exceed the safety level of Acetaminophen. Please contact the office with any questions you may have. Opioid pain medications (Tylenol #3, Vicodin, Norco) may cause dizziness, nausea, and drowsiness in many patients, so you SHOULD NOT do anything that is potentially dangerous to you or others (i.e.: drive, operate heavy machinery, or partake in any high-risk activities).