



## **Post-Surgical Instructions for a Free Gingival Graft/Connective Tissue Graft**

### **Side effects of the procedure**

- 🦷 Bleeding is normal during the post-operative period. If the bleeding is bothering you, applying pressure for 30-45 minutes with a piece of wet gauze or a wet tea bag will usually stop the blood flow. Note that especially on the palate, using a wiping motion will only cause the area to bleed more. Firm, stationary pressure is the best technique to use. If you feel that your bleeding is excessive, contact your periodontist.
- 🦷 Pain is normal during the post-operative period. Use the pain medication that your periodontist has prescribed exactly as is written on the prescription.
- 🦷 Swelling is normal during the post-operative period, and is necessary for healing to occur. Swelling can be slightly decreased by applying ice to the face in the area of the surgery, using a routine of 15 minutes on, followed by 15 minutes off, for the first 24 hours. Swelling may be accompanied by bruising on the face and neck, and this is normal.

### **Care of the surgical site**

- 🦷 Avoid smoking. Smoking is directly linked to complications and failures after surgery.
- 🦷 Avoid brushing and flossing in the surgical area during the first two weeks of the post-operative period.
- 🦷 Avoid strenuous physical activity for the two weeks following the procedure.
- 🦷 Your stitches will either dissolve by themselves, or be taken out by your periodontist. Do not attempt to remove them yourself, and do not attempt to touch the surgical area with your hands, as they are not clean. Do not attempt to pull on your lip or cheek to see the surgical area in the mirror or to show it to other people, as this can cause failure of the graft.

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### **Medication**

- 🦷 Use the salt water rinse in the following manner: swish with 15mL (1 tablespoon) for 30 seconds, twice a day, for two weeks. Do not swallow this mouth rinse. Do not use any other mouth rinse in place of this mouth rinse. Let this mouth rinse fall gently from your mouth, rather than spitting it out.
- 🦷 Medications containing codeine or other narcotics can cause drowsiness. It is important in this case to avoid driving or operating heavy machinery.

### **Diet**

Avoid eating or drinking anything hot or spicy, and avoid eating anything hard, during the post-operative period. In fact, if you can manage to avoid chewing anywhere near the surgical area, you will be less likely to develop complications

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