

GINGIVAL GRAFT

Dr. Coatoam has found it necessary to recommend the placement of a gingival graft in your mouth to develop or build a “firm” zone of tissue around a specifically weakened tooth or teeth. The gingival graft usually does not result in the coverage of any exposed root surface, but will prevent your gum tissue from receding or pulling further away from your tooth which may eventually cause tooth loss.

A gingival graft consists of removing a “firm”, healthy piece of tissue from the roof of your mouth and transferring it to the weakened area of concern. During the first 48 to 72 hours, the grafted tissue will send out “tissue fibers” to attach itself securely where it has been placed. A medicated “putty type” bandage is placed over the grafted area to protect it during the initial stage of healing.

DURING NORMAL HEALING, YOU MAY EXPERIENCE A SLIGHT PULSE BEAT TYPE OF PAIN OR, MORE LIKELY, A SORE OR BRUISED FEELING WHEN YOU TOUCH THE OUTSIDE OF YOUR FACE DURING WASHING, SHAVING, APPLYING LOTION OR MAKE-UP, ETC. Typically, some increased swelling over the next three days will be present. A little bit today, a little more tomorrow, reaching a peak on the third day then decreasing a little each day until gone. *Cold compresses are effective during the first 24 hours to minimize swelling, alternating 20 minutes on 20 minutes off. Crushed ice or frozen beverages melting in the mouth (Smoothies, Slurpies, etc.) can also be helpful in applying cold to both the inside and outside.

**Anti-inflammatory medications work well to alleviate these symptoms: Aleve, Aspirin, Advil/Ibuprofen, etc. It is advisable to take only one of these in conjunction with the medications that the doctors have prescribed.*

If you experience any bleeding, gently sponge the area clean with a piece of gauze or the end of a washcloth and apply direct, **CONTINUOUS** pressure with a gauze or dampened tea-bag. After 15 minutes, “peek” to see if bleeding has stopped. If not, continue this process checking every 15 minutes. Bleeding usually stops within one hour.

The medicated, putty-type bandage is also placed in the roof of your mouth. The “donor” area, like a skinned knee, will heal with or without a bandage. It is there only for your comfort and is not critical to healing. When the “putty” comes off the roof area of your mouth, begin rinsing with warm salt water rinses (do not use alcohol-based rinses such as Listerine, Scope, etc.). If tenderness is present, you may apply any numbing agents such as Ora-Gel or Chloroseptic Sore Throat spray for temporary relief.

If the bandage comes off the grafted area, the graft may appear white and then red, or red and white speckled. Do not disturb it. It is normal for the appearance to change colors during initial healing. Do not judge its success during this time but let us evaluate the graft at your post-operative visit. Do not manipulate or explore the graft site for any reason as this may result in loss of the grafted tissue.

Soft foods are advisable the first several days following surgery. Fluids in the way of fruit juices, ice cream, soups and foods mixed in a blender will supply adequate nutrition and calories during the healing stages. Return to a normal diet as soon as possible.

Please avoid any aerobic activity for at least three days post-op!

You may brush your teeth, being careful to avoid operative site. You may use a Q-tip dipped in mouth rinse to clean medicated dressing.

Have all prescriptions filled and take medications as directed. If pain is excessive or any unusual conditions arise, call this office immediately.

DO NOT SMOKE. SMOKING HAS BEEN SHOWN TO DELAY HEALING IN THE MOUTH AND SHOULD BE ELIMINATED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE IN THE EARLY HEALING PHASE.

****BE CERTAIN TO RETURN TO THIS OFFICE AS DIRECTED FOR POST-OPERATIVE TREATMENT.**