

Connective Tissue Grafting Post-Surgical Instructions Post-Operative Care

There is no healing that occurs for the first 24 hours after a surgical procedure. The natural response to “injury” is swelling. The body always responds to an injury with a predictable inflammatory response as the first steps toward healing. Our Post-Op instructions are designed to set up an environment of minimal swelling. Your grafting procedure was performed using a minimally invasive tunnel procedure. Because it is a “closed” site, it is more subject to post-operative swelling. It is very important that the post-operative instructions are followed.

Avoid pulling out your lip, massaging the area, or continually checking the area. There are sutures to hold the graft in place and these will need to be removed in 10-14 days at your post-operative appointment. Sleep with head elevated 2 nights, No strenuous activity for 1 week (no exercise of any type) Take steroid dose pack

Care of the mouth

Brushing and flossing: Begin brushing and flossing the areas not operated on the day following surgery. AVOID THE SURGICAL SITES until given specific brushing instructions at your post-operative visit. Use Peridex mouth rinse twice a day for two minutes each time for the first two weeks to kill bacteria and keep the area clean. Start your Peridex rinse the day after the surgery. Do not eat or drink for about one-half hour after using the rinse because it can cause an unpleasant after taste. Brush the rest of your teeth normally.

Electric Toothbrushes: DO NOT use an electric toothbrush at the surgical site for 8 weeks following surgery.

Water Pik: DO NOT use a Water Pik for at least 8 weeks following surgery.

Eating: In the first 24 hours, adequate nutrition is essential for normal healing. Following surgery your diet should be restricted to cold liquids-yogurt, smoothies, milkshakes, dietary supplements such as Instant Breakfast or Ensure. AVOID PEROXIDE, ALCOHOL, CARBONATED BEVERAGES, AND DRINKING THROUGH A STRAW.

After 24 hours you may have soft foods such as cooked vegetables, fish, pasta, and meatloaf, which are easily chewed. You should use utensils and avoid chewing at the surgical site for two weeks. DO NOT SKIP MEALS. If you take nourishment regularly, you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort, and heal faster.

Activities: Plan to rest at home the remainder of the day of surgery. You may read, watch TV, or work at your desk at home. When sleeping, elevate your head to decrease swelling. After 24 hours, you may return to normal daily routine, but avoid strenuous activities such as heavy lifting, or exercise programs which elevate your heart rate for one week following surgery.

Medications: Take pain medications within one hour after treatment with milk, fruit, juice, or a full glass of water. Never take pain medication on an empty stomach. This medication may be repeated every three to four hours as needed for discomfort. Take prescribed antibiotics as directed until all have been taken. You will begin this medication the day prior to surgery.

Swelling: This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. Your swelling may increase until 5 days post-operatively. This is normal. If you experience an increase in swelling beyond the fifth day or an increase in discomfort, call our office.

Ice Packs: To help minimize swelling, use ice packs. Place the pack on the outside of your face, over the treated area, for 15 minutes, and then take it off for 15 minutes. Continue to alternate 15 on, 15 off as much as possible the first 24 hours after surgery, during waking hours.

Bleeding: Because your graft was placed in a tunnel, there will be minimal visible bleeding that will show in your mouth. Sometimes any bleeding that mixes in your mouth with saliva can look like more than it is. If excessive bleeding occurs or when in doubt, please call our office.

Smoking: DO NOT SMOKE FOR 48 HOURS AFTER SURGERY and avoid smokers if at all possible. Smoking is detrimental to healing tissues and will dramatically affect the results of surgery.

Sutures: We do not use the type of sutures that dissolve by themselves for grafting procedures. We use a suture that is non-resorbable. The type of suture we use actually repels bacteria. Your sutures will be removed at the two week post-operative visit. There will be very little sensation associated with suture removal and requires no anesthesia.

It is our sincere desire that you are as comfortable as possible following surgery. If you should have any questions or problems please call our office anytime at 208-233-3660.