



## Post-Operative Care for Bone Graft

In addition to the general post-operative instructions, we would like to emphasize a few points regarding post-operative care for bone grafts. Your bone graft is made up of many particles. You may find some small granules in your mouth over the first several days. Do not be alarmed by these. It is normal to have some of them come out of the graft site and into your mouth. There are some things you can do to minimize the number of particles that become dislodged:

### Immediately Following Surgery

- Do not disturb the surgical area. Avoid rinsing, spitting, or touching the area on the day of surgery. You may see a metal healing abutment protruding through the gum tissue.
- Eat and take pain medicine after 2 hours or when you are able to tolerate eating and drinking. This will usually occur as the local wears off.
- Place the provided ice pack on the side of your face where surgery was performed on/off for the first 48 hours.
- Do not drink hot liquids and be aware of chewing while you are numb.
- Do not chew on the gauze.
- Hold slight pressure on gauze to the area if bleeding. If the area is not bleeding no need to use gauze.
- Change gauze every 20-30 minutes until \_\_\_\_\_. Please discontinue gauze past this time.
- Eat and start pain medicine by \_\_\_\_\_. Also begin 800 mg of ibuprofen every 4 hours.
- You received an antibiotic. Please start it tonight.
- Use the provided ice packs to apply ice today and tomorrow. Switching to heat on the 3rd day.

### Diet

A soft, mild, and nutritionally balanced diet should be consumed for 2–4 days (or longer if necessary) after your surgery. As the tissue around the bone graft heals, you can return to your normal eating routine.

### Swelling

Swelling from oral surgery is normal and reaches its maximum in 48 hours. Keeping the head elevated with 2 pillows when lying down can minimize facial swelling. Swelling can also be

minimized by applying cold compresses to your face (30 minutes on, 30 minutes off) for the first 48 hours. After 48 hours, warm compresses will help reduce the swelling. These should be continued (30 minutes on, 30 minutes off) until the swelling has subsided.

### Rinsing

We suggest letting the blood clot stabilize with no vigorous rinsing or spitting for 3–5 days. After the first day:

- You may softly brush the adjacent tooth surfaces if the brush does not disturb the graft site.
- Avoid applying pressure with your tongue or fingers to the grafted area, as the material is movable during the initial healing period.
- Do not lift or pull the lip to look at the sutures. This can actually cause damage to the wound site and tear the sutures.

### Bruising

Sometimes bruising may occur 24 or 48 hours after surgery has been performed. Application of warm compresses to the involved area (30 minutes on, 30 minutes off) will expedite the healing process.

### Pain

Unfortunately, most oral surgery procedures are accompanied by some degree of discomfort. There are many good strategies to get you through the process, though. Some form of pain reliever should be taken before the numbness goes away. Over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®), acetaminophen (Tylenol®), or aspirin are adequate if there are no allergies, they have been tolerated in the past, and they do not interfere with any other medications. For more involved procedures, a prescribed narcotic can be taken. The narcotic can also be alternated or taken in addition to ibuprofen if there are no allergies and has been tolerated in the past. Taking your medications with food will decrease the chance of nausea. Remember, narcotic pain medications will impair your judgment and reflexes, so driving and operating heavy machinery is to be avoided.

### Sutures

Sutures that have been placed are usually dissolvable and will fall out on their own within the first 7-10 days. It is not unusual for one or more to loosen and fall out before dissolving, especially in moving areas of your mouth, such as the tongue or cheek areas. If the stitches come out and the wound opens and creates a hole, it is typically not of concern unless there is excessive bleeding. Fortunately, incisions in the mouth do heal very quickly, and any wound

that does open will close naturally. If you have sutures that will need to be removed, you should have a follow up appointment with our office. Removing sutures are pain free and only takes minutes.

### Other Complications

- If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is no cause for alarm. As reviewed in your consultation, this is usually temporary in nature. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb, you could bite it and not feel the sensation. Call Dr. Johnson if you have any questions.
- Slight elevation of temperature immediately following surgery is not uncommon. If the temperature persists, notify the office. Tylenol or ibuprofen should be taken to reduce the fever.
- You should be careful going from the lying down position to standing. You could get lightheaded from low blood sugar or medications. Before standing up, you should sit for one minute before getting up.
- Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are the bony walls which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed.
- If the corners of your mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment such as Vaseline.
- Sore throats and pain when swallowing is not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.
- As discussed in your initial exam, do not use tobacco products for at least 1 week.
- Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative event which will resolve in time.

Your case is unique, no two mouths are alike. Discuss any problems with our office.

We hope that your recovery will be smooth and pleasant. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office. A 24-hour answering service is available. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.

