

Bone Grafting

Detailed Aftercare Instructions

Follow your treating dentist's specific directions first.

The First 24 Hours

- Keep the gauze in place, biting gently and firmly, for 30–60 minutes or as directed; replace with fresh gauze if bleeding continues.
- Do not rinse, spit forcefully, use a straw, or smoke/vape for the first 24 hours — this protects the blood clot that starts healing.
- Rest at home. Avoid bending over, heavy lifting, and exercise.
- Keep your head slightly raised when lying down; use an extra pillow.

Bleeding

- Some oozing and pink-tinged saliva the first day are normal.
- If bleeding continues, place a fresh folded gauze pad over the site and bite firmly for 30 minutes.
- Do not sleep with gauze in your mouth.
- Call us if bleeding stays heavy or does not slow after several tries.

Swelling & Bruising

- Swelling is normal and usually peaks on day 2 or 3, then improves.
- Apply an ice pack to the cheek: 15–20 minutes on, 15–20 minutes off, during the first 24–36 hours.
- After 36 hours, switch to a warm compress on the cheek to ease stiffness.
- Mild bruising of the cheek or jaw is normal and fades within a week or two.

Pain & Medication

- Take pain medication as directed — do not wait until pain is severe.
- Take medication with food to reduce nausea.
- Do not drive or operate machinery if medication makes you drowsy.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, finish the full course, even if you feel better.
- Use any prescribed mouth rinse exactly as directed.

Eating & Drinking

- Start with cool liquids and soft foods: water, yogurt, applesauce, mashed potatoes, lukewarm soup (not hot).

- Chew on the opposite side of your mouth; do not chew on the treated site.
- Add firmer foods gradually as comfort allows.
- Avoid hot, spicy, acidic, crunchy, hard, or sticky foods for the first few days.
- Do not use a straw for at least 24–48 hours (or longer if your dentist advises).
- Drink plenty of water.
- Do not smoke or vape — smoking can cause the graft to fail.

Protecting the Graft

- Do not touch the graft area with your tongue, fingers, or objects.
- Do not rinse vigorously or use a water flosser near the graft for the first days.
- A few small graft particles in your mouth can be normal in the first days.
- If a large amount of graft material comes out, or you see the graft exposed, call us.
- If a membrane or dressing was placed, leave it alone — do not pull it.

Oral Hygiene

- Do not brush the graft area until your dentist tells you to.
- Brush your other teeth gently.
- Rinse only as directed — often with a prescribed rinse or gentle warm salt water after the first 24 hours.
- Do not floss the graft area until cleared.

Stitches

- Stitches may dissolve on their own in 1–2 weeks, or your dentist may remove them at your follow-up visit.
- Do not pull, pick at, or cut the stitches.

Healing Timeline

- The graft needs months to harden and become part of your bone.
- You will have follow-up visits, sometimes with X-rays, to check healing before the next step (such as an implant).
- Keep every appointment — the next step depends on how the graft heals.

Warning Signs

- Call us if you have: pain that keeps getting worse after the first few days; swelling that grows after day 3; fever; pus or a bad taste that worsens; a large amount of graft material coming out; or the gum opening over the graft.

Follow-Up

- Keep all follow-up visits, even if you feel fine.
- Tell us about any ongoing pain, swelling, or concerns at each visit.

Call us right away or seek emergency care if you have:

- Bleeding that will not stop.
- Trouble breathing or swallowing.
- Severe swelling, fever, or pain not relieved by medication.
- Signs of an allergic reaction: rash, itching, or swelling of the lips or tongue.
- Pus, a bad taste that keeps getting worse, or swelling that spreads to the face or neck.

For a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

Questions or Follow-Up

Office: 718-584-9777

TEXT MESSAGE ONLY: 516-855-8033

For follow-up after a recent procedure.

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This sheet is general guidance and does not replace your dentist's instructions.