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POST SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR GINGIVAL GRAFT

- 1. DISCOMFORT:** The average patient experiences mild to moderate discomfort after surgery. Take your pain medication as directed, usually one pill every 4-6 hours, as needed to control pain. It is important that you take the pain medication before the numbness completely wears off. The day of the procedure it is recommended to take the medication on a regular schedule (every 4-6 hours). Do **not** take the pain pill on an empty stomach, as it may cause nausea and vomiting. If for any reason the discomfort persists, do not hesitate to call the office. You may also take 600-800mg of ibuprofen (advil, motrin, or generic) every 6 hours instead of taking the prescription medication. Do not take ibuprofen if you are currently taking any blood thinners, aspirin, or have any underlying stomach or intestinal problems.

- 2. BLEEDING:** Expect some oozing and bleeding from the roof of the mouth and grafted area for the next 12-24 hours. To avoid excessive bleeding please follow these guidelines:
 - a) If a stint has been made, wear it for the next 24 hours without removing it. After 24 hours, remove it and clean it by rinsing it off and brushing all surfaces with the Peridex mouth rinse.
 - b) After the first 24 hours, the stint can be left out if desired. Most patients prefer to wear it when eating or drinking for the next several days.
 - c) Avoid excess spitting, drinking through a straw, or sucking action with the mouth. This may dislodge a blood clot and cause further bleeding.
 - d) If excessive bleeding should occur from the palate, insert the stint and apply firm pressure for 10 minutes. If bleeding occurs in an area other than the palate, apply pressure with a moistened gauze or moistened tea bag. If bleeding is still present, please call Dr. Ramirez.

- 3. SMOKING:** If you smoke, please keep in mind this can cause delayed healing, increased discomfort and even failure of the graft. If you smoke, please keep it to a minimum.

- 4. SWELLING:** It is not unusual to have some swelling and/or discomfort in the surgical area. An ice pack may be applied to the outside of the face as soon after the surgical procedure. Apply the ice pack for 10-15 minutes then remove for 20 minutes. This can be repeated throughout the day. Use an ice pack for up to 48 hours after the surgery. To reduce swelling after 48 hours, apply moist heat to the site using the same intervals as the ice. If swelling persists for more than 4 days, please contact the office.
- 3. DRESSING:** A dressing may have been placed over the graft. This acts like a protective bandage. It usually is removed after one week. It is best to stay on for the first 24-48 hours. Part of the dressing may flake off, or the dressing may fall off. The dressing is for your comfort, so if it does come off and you would like it replaced please call the office.
- 5. RINSING:** You will be given a prescription mouth rinse to use after the surgery. Rinse each night before bedtime and in the morning until you are instructed to stop (usually 1-2 weeks post-surgery). Additionally, warm salt water rinses (1 teaspoon salt in 8 ounces of warm water) is soothing and can also be used to rinse after meals or as often as needed. Begin flossing and brushing the teeth away from the surgically treated site the next day following surgery. **Avoid peroxide, alcohol, carbonated beverages, and smoking for at least 24 hours.**
- 6. NUTRITION:** Adequate nutrition is essential for normal healing. During the first 24 hours, your diet should be restricted to cool liquids and soft foods which are easily chewed and swallowed. Dietary supplements such Instant Breakfast or Ensure are recommended. A multi-vitamin such as z-Bec is good. Continue a soft diet for an entire week following surgery. Please do not skip meals. **If you maintain a healthy diet following surgery, you typically feel better, gain strength, experience less discomfort and heal faster.**
- 7. ACTIVITY:** We ask that you refrain from any strenuous activity and exercise for one week following your oral surgery.
- 8. SENSITIVITY OF THE TEETH:** Your teeth may be sensitive to hot and cold (and for some people sweets). This will slowly diminish and should be gone in 4-8 weeks after surgery, providing good oral hygiene is maintained.