

## POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS FOR BONE GRAFT SURGERY

### DAY OF SURGERY

**FIRST HOUR:** Bite down gently but firmly on the gauze packs that have been placed over the surgical areas, making sure they remain in place. Do not change them for the first 30 minutes unless the bleeding is not controlled. The gauze may be gently removed after 30 minutes. If active bleeding persists, place a new gauze or moist tea bag over the bone graft site and bite down to obtain pressure over the surgical site for another 30 minutes. The gauze may then be changed as necessary (typically every 20 to 30 minutes until active bleeding has stopped and the gauze is a pink color). It is best to moisten the gauze or tea bag with tap water prior to positioning.

**EXERCISE CARE:** Do not disturb the surgical area. **DO NOT** probe the area with any object or vigorously rinse the area. You may brush your teeth gently. **PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 72 hours and for as little as possible while you are healing.

**OOZING:** Intermittent bleeding or oozing overnight is normal. Bleeding may be controlled by placing fresh gauze or a tea bag wrapped in gauze over the areas and biting on the gauze or tea bag for 20-30 minutes at a time.

**PERSISTENT BLEEDING:** Bleeding should never be severe. If so, it usually means that the packs are being clenched between teeth only and are not exerting pressure on the surgical areas. Try repositioning the packs and verify they are over the surgical site and not between the teeth which are next to the surgical site. If bleeding remains uncontrolled, please call our office. **Do not leave gauze in your mouth while sleeping, eating or drinking.**

**SWELLING:** Swelling is often associated with oral surgery. It can be minimized by using a cold pack, ice bag or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied firmly to the cheek adjacent to the surgical area. This should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off during the first 24 hours after surgery. **DO NOT APPLY ICE AFTER THE FIRST 24 HOURS AS THIS MAY CAUSE JAW MUSCLES TO TIGHTEN.** If you have been prescribed medication for the control of swelling, be sure to take it as directed.

**PAIN:** Unfortunately most oral surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. You will usually have a prescription for pain medication. **If you take the first pill before the anesthetic has worn off, you should be able to manage any discomfort better.** Some patients find that stronger pain medication causes nausea, but if you precede each pain pill with a small amount of food, chances for nausea will be reduced. The effects of pain medications vary widely among individuals. Some patients may even require two of the pain pills at one time if directed per the instructions of your medication. Remember that the most severe pain is usually experienced the first six to twelve hours after the local anesthetic wears off; afterwards, your need for medicine should lessen. Significant soreness is normal for the first three to five days following surgery as swelling will peak around day three. **If you find you are taking large amounts of pain medication at frequent intervals, please call our office. If you anticipate needing more prescription medication for the weekend, please call for a refill during weekday business hours.**

**NAUSEA:** Nausea is not uncommon after surgery. Sometimes pain medications are the cause. Nausea can be reduced by preceding each pain pill with a small amount of soft food, and taking the pill with a large volume of water. Classic Coca Cola may also help with nausea. Try to keep taking clear fluids (juices, water, etc) and minimize dosing of pain medications, but call us if you do not feel better.

**DIET:** Eat any nourishing food that can be taken with comfort. Avoid extremely hot foods. **Do not use a straw for the first week after surgery.** It is sometimes advisable, but not absolutely required, to keep the first day's intake to liquids or pureed foods (soups, puddings, yogurt, milk shakes, etc.) It is best to avoid foods such as nuts, sunflower seeds, popcorn, etc. Over the next several days you may gradually progress to solid foods (pancakes, eggs, pasta, lasagna, etc.) It is important not to skip meals! If you take nourishment regularly you will feel better, gain strength, have less discomfort and heal faster. If you are a diabetic, maintain your normal eating habits or follow instructions given by your doctor.

**SUTURES:** If sutures were placed, they will likely require removal at your next post-operative visit in approximately two weeks. Sometimes these sutures may come out before this next appointment or loosen up significantly and this is normal. However, if the doctor placed a dissolving suture, it will dissolve in about 1 week.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS**

**MOUTH RINSES:** Keeping your mouth clean after surgery is essential. Use 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8-10 ounce glass of warm water and gently rinse with portions of the solution. Because of the delicate nature of the materials used in the bone graft it is best to avoid harsh mouthwashes (listerine, ACT, etc.) for the first 2 weeks after surgery.

**BRUSHING:** Begin your normal oral hygiene routine as soon as possible after surgery. Brush at least twice per day. Soreness and swelling may not permit vigorous brushing, but please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

**HOT APPLICATIONS:** After the first two days, you may apply warm compresses to the skin over the areas of swelling (hot water bottle, hot moist towels, heating pad) for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off to help soothe tender areas and loosen tight muscles. This will also help decrease stiffness. The ice pack provided can also be used as a heat pack when placed in the microwave. If you choose to microwave this ice pack please watch it carefully and take it out every 10 seconds to check on temperature. If left unattended it may pop in the microwave.

**HEALING:** Normal healing after bone grafting surgery should be as follows: The first five days after surgery are generally the most uncomfortable and there is usually some swelling. On the third day you should be more comfortable and, although still swollen, can usually begin a more substantial diet. **The remainder of the post-operative course should be gradual, steady improvement.** It is not uncommon, however, for some discomfort to persist for a week or longer. If you don't see continued improvement, please call our office.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call our office at 303-663-7890. A 24-hour answering service is available to contact the doctor on call after hours. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response to your question or concern.