



savannah periodontics
PERIODONTICS AND IMPLANT DENTISTRY

Gum Grafting Post-Operative Instructions

Please Read
Carefully

In order for your gum graft to heal properly, it is important to carefully follow these instructions. Once you've read through, please call or email the office if you still have questions. Contact information is listed on the reverse side.

Do:

- **Take all of your medications as prescribed:** Antibiotics and pain meds are prescribed to help prevent infection and keep you comfortable after surgery. In some cases a Medrol Dose Pack (a steroid) may be prescribed to help with swelling. If you have side effects such as nausea, vomiting, or hives, discontinue and call Dr. O'Neill immediately. Do not drive or work while you are taking the pain medication.
- **Wear your surgical stent:** The stent is designed to protect the “donor” site, promote faster healing and should be worn at all times, especially when eating. After surgery, keep the stent in for 48 hours without removing. After 48 hours, only remove the stent to rinse it after you eat until your post-op. If the stent is painful or too tight, please call the office as adjustments can be made so the stent is more comfortable.
- **Ice your face:** 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off. This is the most common thing that people forget to do, but is often the most helpful to prevent painful swelling and bruising. You may use an ice pack, zip-lock bags, or a frozen bag of peas. Make sure to have a protective layer between your skin and the ice, such as a washcloth or paper towel. Continue icing until the swelling resolves, which could be 4-5 days.
- **Gently rinse with salt-water:** 1 teaspoon of salt in room-temperature water can be soothing to a sore surgery site. When rinsing, be careful not to balloon out your cheeks or swish vigorously as this will disturb the graft site. Do not use salt-water if you were prescribed Peridex Rinse.
- **Maintain a soft diet and chew away from the surgery site:** Eat only foods that are soft enough to cut with a fork and chew on the side opposite your surgery. Chew slowly and take small bites of food. If any of your front teeth were grafted, do not bite into anything. Avoid foods such as popcorn, potato chips or sharp foods that could injure the graft site.
- **Place firm pressure if the roof of the mouth starts to bleed:** Most bleeding complications are caused by removing the stent too soon. If this occurs, hold pressure on the side of the stent with your thumb for approximately 10-15 minutes. If bleeding persists, call Dr. O'Neill immediately.
- **Restrict physical activity:** Avoid strenuous activity for at least 72 hours after the graft surgery to reduce bleeding complications. Even bending over to lift something or tie your shoes can increase pressure enough to cause bleeding.
- **Rest!** You will heal faster and feel better if you allow yourself time to rest. When resting and sleeping, prop your head up slightly with pillows to decrease bleeding, bruising and swelling.

Don't:

- **DON'T pull on your lip to look at the graft:** Please avoid the temptation to look at the graft site. This will loosen your stitches and can possibly tear the gum tissue. Pulling on the graft site will also move the graft, which has been carefully sutured in place. **THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!**
- **DON'T cut or trim your sutures:** The graft sites are sutured with one long continuous suture that resembles a shoelace and wraps around the backs of your teeth. Avoid the temptation to play with the sutures with your tongue. As the gum tissue heals, the sutures will loosen. This is a normal process but if you cut the suture, it will unravel and you will lose the graft.
- **DON'T brush over the surgery area:** You can brush all of your teeth except those involved in the surgery. If your teeth feel fuzzy or dirty, use a damp Q-tip to gently polish the enamel as long as you don't touch the gum tissue. Avoid mouth rinses that have alcohol, such as Listerine, as they will sting and inflame the surgery site.
- **DON'T eat the following foods:** Citrus, spicy foods, alcohol, salt. As a general rule, don't eat anything that you wouldn't want to come into contact with a paper-cut on your finger!

If you are having minor complications after surgery or have questions, please call the office during business hours:

Office: (912) 355-2688

Office Manager Email: beth@savperio.com

If you are having serious complications after surgery or problems with medications prescribed after your surgery, you are welcome to call or text Dr. O'Neill on his cell phone. Leave a detailed message if there is no answer.

Cell Phone: (912) 655-5911

Email: joneill@savperio.com

Serious complications include:

- Bleeding that will not stop after 15 minutes of firm pressure
- Severe pain that prevents you from sleeping or working
- Nausea/vomiting caused by the pain medications, antibiotics or other medications that were prescribed
- Allergic reactions to medications or products used in your surgery
- Painful swelling that is unusual in size
- Persistent fever, especially while on antibiotics

Please only call or text Dr. O'Neill's cell phone for emergencies. To reschedule appointments, please make sure to call the office phone number.

If you are having life-threatening symptoms such as anaphylaxis, trouble breathing, severe swelling of the throat preventing breathing, etc. call 9-1-1 immediately.