

# South Hill Periodontics

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## CARE FOLLOWING SOFT TISSUE GRAFT SURGERY

*Oral skin grafts are very fragile for the first week following surgery. You will need to take special care to protect the site so that the graft will not displace. **The new graft will look white initially. This is normal healing.***

**DIET:** Drink plenty of liquids and eat only soft foods for the first week after surgery. Avoid hard French bread, corn-on-the-cob, apples, etc., which may dislodge the graft. Try to chew on those teeth not involved with the grafting procedure. **Avoid drinking out of straws.**

**SMOKING:** Smoking should be eliminated during the first week after surgery. Smoking irritates the surgical areas and slows healing of the tissue.

**SWELLING:** An icepack held over the outside of the face in increments of 10 minutes will help reduce swelling (10 minutes on, 10 minutes off.) If swelling appears to be increasing beyond the initial 72 hours, please call our office.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** Complete rest for the first 6 –12 hours after surgery will reduce discomfort, decrease swelling, and speed healing. Normal activities are usually resumed on the day after surgery.

**ORAL HYGIENE:** **Do not brush the area of the surgical site** until your follow up appointment. Brush and floss all other teeth as you normally would. Start the prescription mouth rinse 24 hours after the surgery.

**PAIN:** Some pain or discomfort is to be expected following any surgery. Start by taking 600mg of Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, etc.) along with 1000mg Acetaminophen (Tylenol) at the same time every 6 hours. You may have been prescribed pain pills that are to be used for “break through” pain if needed. Take medications with food. **Do no operate a vehicle or machinery while on prescription pain medication.**

**STENT:** If you were given a plastic retainer (stent), wear it for the first 24 hours without removing. This will minimize bleeding and aid in clot formation. **Wear stent 3-4 days constantly.** It is for your comfort and to protect the wound in the donor area. **After 3-4 days you will probably wear it only to eat. The stent should be taken out and cleaned twice daily by gently brushing and rinsing.**

**SEDATION:** If I.V. sedation was used for your surgery a responsible adult must take you home from the office. It is very important that you stay home and rest on the day of surgery, as it takes several hours for the effects of the sedative medications to wear off. Do not drive a car, operate machinery, use alcohol, or conduct business on the day of surgery.

**SUTURES:** Sutures are used to hold the graft in place. These are very delicate and may come loose after a few days; this usually presents no problem. Any remaining sutures will be gently removed in our office 10 – 14 days following surgery.

Slight oozing of blood, that tints the saliva light pink, is normal for the first few days after surgery. If continuous bleeding occurs from the donor site try applying firm pressure with the stent by biting on gauze pads on that side for 20 minutes.

After the first 48 hours following surgery you should feel better each day. However, if you have any questions concerning your progress, please do not hesitate to call. We can be reached by calling **(509) 536-7032.**