

Gingival (Gum) Surgery & Biopsy Post-Operative Instructions and Information

- 1. Bleeding:** Light bleeding or oozing is normal during the first 1-2 days. DO NOT apply gauze to the surgery site; it could stick to the sutures and pull them out. If heavy or continuous bleeding occurs, call the Clinic or the Doctor immediately.
- 2. Palate Cover (for certain grafting procedures only):** For the first 24 hours do not remove the palate cover. After the first day and for the first week the palate cover should be worn day and night. However, you should remove it temporarily when cleaning your teeth in the morning, after meals, and before bed. For the Second week the palate cover can be reduced to being worn while eating and sleeping, although it can be worn more often if it improves your level of comfort.
- 3. Rest:** Limit activities for the first 24 hours after surgery. If needed, place a towel over your pillow to prevent blood from staining.
- 4. Swelling and Bruising:** Normal after surgery, and will vary with the person and type of surgery. Apply ice packs to the jaw and cheek area during the first 24 hours to reduce swelling, this is important. Use the ice packs 15 minutes on/15 minutes off, and then repeat. After the first 24 hours, ice will not affect swelling but may reduce pain. Swelling will reach a maximum about 48-72 hours after surgery. If bruising occurs it will resolve over a period of days.
 - For Procedures that involved a Dexamethasone Injection:** Dexamethasone is a Corticosteroid that is injected into a muscle to reduce post-surgical swelling and pain. If you had the injection and begin to develop more significant swelling and pain after 2-3 days, please contact the Clinic or the Doctor to receive a Prescribed Oral Corticosteroid that will help to reduce swelling and pain for the remainder of the healing period.
- 5. Infection, Fever and Antibiotics:** Most healthy patients have less than a 1% risk of developing infection after gum surgery. If the doctor felt you were at increased risk of infection because of your general health or the type of surgery, you will be placed on antibiotic medication. It is important that you follow directions on the label and take the medication until finished. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the Clinic or Doctor immediately. It is a normal reaction to surgery to develop a slight elevation in temperature for 24-48 hours after surgery. If the fever persists or is highly elevated and you feel generally fatigued, please contact the Clinic or Doctor immediately.
- 6. Surgical Site Pain and Pain Reliever Instructions:** Pain normally reaches a peak 48-72 hours after surgery. Follow the directions on the bottle of any prescribed medication. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the Clinic immediately.
- 7. Diet: For the first 24 hours** your first three meals should consist mostly of cold liquids; do not drink hot liquids during the first 24 hours. Dietary supplements such as Instant Breakfast or Ensure work well. Avoid drinking through a straw. **For the first week** eat regularly whatever you can tolerate. Soft foods and liquids like cooked vegetables, pasta and soup that are high in vitamins and protein are recommended. Avoid nuts, popcorn, and crunchy or spicy foods that can irritate the surgical site. **Additionally for Crown Lengthening & Grafting** avoid chewing on the side of the gum surgery for 4 weeks.
- 8. Adults: Oral Hygiene for Crown Lengthening, Grafting and Frenum/Muscle-pull Procedures:** Brush normally in all other areas, but do not brush directly over the surgery site for the first 2 weeks. Instead, during the first 2 weeks, rinse gently with the prescribed Chlorhexidine and then gently dab the surgical site with a soft toothbrush that has been soaked in the prescribed Chlorhexidine.
 - NO PEEKING:** It is extremely important that you not pull on the cheek or lip to peek at the surgical site for the next 2 weeks. Pulling on the cheek or lip to view the surgical site can loosen the sutures, and can cause grafts to fail.
- 9. Adults: Oral Hygiene for most Biopsy and Excision Procedures:** You will not be prescribed a Chlorhexidine rinse. Instead, rinse gently with a solution of 1 teaspoon of salt in a warm glass of water 4 or 5 times daily. Continue this for the first week after surgery.
- 10. Children: Oral Hygiene for most Tooth Uncoverings, Gingival & Frenum/Muscle-pull Procedures:** You will not be prescribed a Chlorhexidine rinse. Instead, rinse gently with a solution of 1 teaspoon of salt in a warm glass of water 2 or 3 times daily. Continue this for the first week after surgery.
- 11. Smoking:** Can delay healing and increase the risk of infection. Smoking should be avoided for 48 hours after the gum surgery and greatly reduced for 3 weeks after the gum surgery.
- 12. Antibiotics (females only):** If they were prescribed, they will inactivate most birth control medication; use other methods of contraception until your next menstrual cycle.
- 13. Sutures:** You will be advised if sutures will need to be removed at a follow-up visit. Otherwise, all other dissolving sutures will begin to loosen within 6-10 days.
- 14. Sedation:** If you were sedated for the surgery, it is important for someone to stay with you for 24 hours until you have recovered from the effects of the medications.