Special Instructions – Gum Grafts

☐ General Care: The most critical thing that you can do to assist with successful healing of your gum graft is to prevent any trauma to the area. Do not pull on your lip or attempt to look at the graft. Avoid pressure or bumping your face adjacent to the grafted area.

☐ Dressing: The surgical site may have been covered by a putty-like dressing that will protect the area during the first few days of healing. It may stay in place until your first post-surgical visit. If it comes off before the first post-surgical visit and you are comfortable, do not be concerned. Just be sure to keep the area as clean as possible until your next visit with gentle water or warm salt water rinses. Otherwise, the dressing and any remaining sutures will be removed at the first post-operative visit.

☐ Palate Protector: Leave the palatal protector in place for 72 hours without removal – then remove, rinse and replace daily – it is recommended to wear the retainer for 10 days before attempting to discontinue its use. Make sure to remove the protector after each meal and rinse with water.

**To remove the protector, use your fingernail or a toothpick behind the very back molar on the right side of your mouth to disengage the appliance.*

**Attempting to discontinue the retainer after only a few days may make it difficult to put the retainer back in comfortably if you decide to do so (the harvested areas will puff slightly without the retainer in place after only a few hours and then make it tender if you put it back in place).*

****For extra comfort:*** *Place a small amount of* ***Orajel*** *(Benzocaine topical anesthetic) on the inside of the palate protector before seating the protector in your mouth. The topical anesthetic gel will sting temporarily before numbing the area and providing significant pain relief.*

****Orajel*** *also makes an over-the-counter mouth rinse that can be used to soothe the surgical areas.*

**If you have dogs in the house, they will want to chew / eat the palate protector – do not leave the appliance out on any countertop if you have a dog in your house.*

☐ Bleeding: Minor bleeding/oozing is normal up to 48 hours after surgery. Bleeding may be initiated by removing the palatal protector. Replacing the palatal protector and applying pressure with you thumb, or cold water held in your mouth, will help slow bleeding. If bleeding continues and you become concerned, please contact us for further instructions and/or assistance.

☐ Eating: Avoid biting into foods directly over the grafted areas for two weeks. Cut food into small pieces and place on untreated side of mouth. Avoid hot (temperature) and spicy foods.

☐ Additional Instructions: _____
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_____

☐ Contacts: Office 405-636-1411 After hours emergency: 405-627-2474 (Dr. Hager Cell)
315-427-1820 (Dr. Namy Cell)

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Post Treatment Instructions for Gum Grafting (3 weeks)

1. No tooth brushing over surgical sites. No cotton swabs, or wash cloths. Only use the prescribed mouthrinse and salt water to clean the area (gentle rinses only – no vigorous swishing)
2. No peroxides
3. No coconut oil
4. No Flossing
5. No Water-Pik
6. If possible, avoid chewing any foods over the surgical site. If both sides of the mouth have been treated, small bites of very soft foods are recommended.
7. As best possible, keep your tongue away from the surgical area
8. As best possible, sleep on the opposite side of the surgical area (to prevent pressure from hands / pillow while sleeping)
9. Do not rub your face over the surgical area
10. Do not attempt to pull your lip / cheeks back to look at the surgical area
11. No wind instruments or blowing balloons
12. No straws
13. No mints over surgical site
14. No chewing gum over surgical site
15. Avoid extremely hot foods (scalding coffee or soups)
16. Tobacco in any form should be avoided
17. Please let your doctor know if you have a night guard – do not wear the guard unless it has been checked for clearance over the surgical site
18. Avoid clenching of teeth as much as possible
19. No facial devices (snorkeling)
20. CPAP hoods should be fitted as loosely as possible
21. Swelling over the surgical site will peak at 72 hours – call your doctor if swelling increases after 72 hours
22. Some cold sensitivity of the teeth is expected for as much as six weeks following treatment
23. Pain control: The prescribed narcotic and ibuprofen can be taken together. Start with the ibuprofen and add the pain pill if needed.
24. *If your gum graft was harvested from the roof of your mouth, it can take 6-8 months for this donor site to be free of any “odd sensations” when you touch the area with your tongue.

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