

---

## Patient Self-Care Following Gum Recession Surgery

**ACTIVITY:** After leaving our dental office today, we suggest you consider relaxing or at least limiting your activity as much as possible for the remainder of the day. Avoid strenuous activity or aerobic exercise for the next 2-3 days. **Do not pull on your lips to view the surgical areas with your fingers or any other device for 6 weeks, you could disrupt the graft with continuous pulling.**

**DISCOMFORT:** Some discomfort may be present when the anesthesia wears off. You have been given a prescription for Ibuprofen, anti-inflammatory (NSAID) analgesic, assuming it is not contraindicated per your health history. If you are experiencing uncomfortable pain, you may add Tylenol (up to 1000 mg) every 6 hours. Once the anesthesia wears off from the appointment most are comfortable with the Ibuprofen only. If you are not comfortable, follow this regimen: 800 mg ibuprofen + 1000 mg of Tylenol (acetaminophen) for one to three 6-8 hour cycles. Then, try to cut down on the Tylenol by taking 800 mg of ibuprofen and 500 mg of Tylenol. Try this regimen for a few days. Studies show this regimen is actually more powerful than the use of narcotics.

**INFECTION:** If you have been given an antibiotic please continue taking it as prescribed until all of the pills have been taken. After a few days, if pain or swelling increases or you are experiencing an elevated temperature, please call the doctor.

**SWELLING:** It is normal for some swelling to occur after surgery, particularly in the lower jaw. To minimize swelling after surgery, apply an ice bag wrapped in a light towel or handkerchief to the outside of your face over the operated area. This should be left on your face for about 20 minutes, then removed for 20 minutes, or alternated from side-to-side, between operated areas, for 2-3 hours after surgery. The use of both ice and the NSAID analgesic as described above will reduce the amount and duration of facial swelling.

**BLEEDING:** It is common to have slight bleeding for a few hours following surgery. If bleeding persists, apply a moistened tea bag to the surgical site with firm but gentle pressure for 15-20 minutes. Let yourself rest for 15 minutes then repeat the application of a tea bag for a second time if you still have slight bleeding. If excessive bleeding continues, please call our office. Remember, most of the blood you may see in your mouth is actually a little bit of blood mixed with a lot of saliva - blood is a very strong "dye" and a little bit of blood will color your saliva dramatically.

**ORAL HYGIENE:** Brushing and oral hygiene procedures should be done as usual in all untreated areas. Avoid dental flossing in operated areas during the first week following surgery. Also avoid the use of water irrigation devices such as Water-piks for 1 month following surgery. The exposed operated areas should be gently swabbed with a sponge swab saturated with the rinse in your **Post Operative bag** as a last oral hygiene procedure at bedtime and again in the morning, after eating and drinking starting the day after your procedure for the next week. An extra soft p-op toothbrush is provided and should be used 3-4 days following the swabs.

**EATING AND DRINKING:** Do not try to eat until all anesthesia (numbness) has worn off. High protein foods and liquids are desirable for 3-5 days following surgery. Semi-solid foods may be eaten as long as this may be done comfortably. Eggs, custard, yogurt, pasta, steamed vegetables, casseroles, cooked cereals are some things that you might consider eating during the first few days following your surgery. Avoid use of straws for at least one week. Avoid spicy, salty, acidic, crunchy, sticky or very hot foods or liquids. Also, avoid nuts, chips or other crunchy or fibrous foods which may become caught between your teeth.

**USE OF REMOVALBLE DENTAL APPLIANCES:** If you have been prescribed a bite appliance from Dr. Edwards please wear it as instructed. Check with the Doctor about any other appliances (e.g., retainers, invisalign, etc.)

**CARE OF THE DENTAL APPLIANCE:** It should be brushed and rinsed when you perform your normal oral hygiene care. If a soft "cushioning" liner has been applied, it is essential that this be checked frequently to see if it is hardening and needs replacement. If it hardens and rests on the surgical site, it could be detrimental to healing.

**DO NOT BE ALARMED:**

- If you experience swelling - this can be avoided by icing in the the first 24 hours and following the protocol
- If you experience bruising - This is common due to a vessel being nicked and blood pooling in a tissue space. This should go away with healing time.
- If you experience cold sensitivity for up to 6 weeks or longer - This is due to the tooth nerve being activated by the trauma from the procedure. This will settle down with time

**We want your treatment to provide as positive a healing experience as possible. If you are having any problems or have any questions not covered in these guidelines, please feel free to call us at any time. The doctor can be reached after hours (317) 842-2273**