

## Care of Mouth Following Periodontal Surgery

**Bleeding** – If used, sutures are usually dissolvable and will fall out on their own within 5-10 days. A small amount of bleeding is normal during the first 24 hours following surgery. If a significant amount of bleeding is seen, place gauze on the area and gently apply consistent pressure for 30-40 minutes. A tea bag can be used if you do not have gauze. Avoid rinsing, spitting or drinking through a straw after your surgery as strong suction in the oral cavity may cause more bleeding. Avoid continually pulling at your lip to check the operative site, especially if you have received a soft tissue graft. Grafts are delicate and should not be pulled or abraded in any way. Allowing the tissues to rest undisturbed assists the healing process. \*You may wish to place a towel on your pillowcase to avoid staining from any blood-tainted saliva.

**Swelling** - Some degree of swelling is normal and to be expected following surgery. Immediately after your procedure, you will be given an icepack to place on the face adjacent to the treated area: alternate 10 minutes on and 10 minutes off with the icepack for the first 2-3 hours following your procedure. This will help reduce any discomfort and swelling. Swelling may be at a maximum 2 or 3 days after surgery. Keeping your head elevated (in a recliner or on a several pillows) will reduce swelling. *Patients receiving soft tissue grafts will be exempt from this regimen.*

**Oral Hygiene** - Do not perform any oral hygiene for the remainder of the day of your surgery. Do not rinse the mouth or spit on the day of surgery. Spitting will cause more bleeding. Beginning the day following your surgery, you may return to your normal hygiene regimen for all untreated areas of your mouth. The surgical site, however, should not be touched. You will be prescribed an antimicrobial mouth rinse for use in this area during the post-operative phase. Please note that your teeth may experience some degree of increased temperature sensitivity. This is common immediately after surgery and will gradually decrease. Fluoride rinses or gels may be prescribed to aid in reducing this sensitivity. Oral cleanliness is essential to proper healing.

**Diet** - Avoid eating or drinking anything very hot or cold for the first few days after surgery. Avoid foods with sharp edges (chips, pretzels, etc.) and do not chew immediately over the surgery area. Your diet should be relatively soft during the post-operative period. Avoid carbonated and alcoholic beverages for 24 hours and do not use a straw for one week. You must take at least two glasses of liquid with pain medication.

**Pain** – Initially, you may have some discomfort but it will gradually diminish. If medications were prescribed, take as directed with two full glasses of liquid. Do not take pain medication on an empty stomach.

**Physical Activity** – Avoid strenuous physical activity/exercise for the first 24 hours following surgery. Strenuous activity will increase your blood pressure and disrupt clot formation.

**Smoking** – Do not smoke for at least 48 hours following surgery as this increases the risk of infection and may delay healing. 7-14 days is recommended for optimal healing.

**Follow-up Visit** – Return to the office as requested for suture removal and/or examination. Contact our office if you have any questions or problems before that time. Please inform us if you cannot keep your appointment so that we can reschedule at your earliest convenience.

**Please call Dr. Barker directly if you have any concerns after office hours:  
443-343-2314 Leave name, phone number and a brief message**