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## **CARE OF THE MOUTH FOLLOWING SOFT TISSUE GRAFT SURGERY (PALATAL DONOR)**

The area where the soft tissue graft was taken is the palate. This will probably cause you the most problem. Since you do not form a scab in the mouth, the area on the palate may appear ulcerated. Don't become concerned, this is normal healing.

The most common problem associated with the palate is bleeding. The slightest trauma during eating, etc. may start profuse bleeding. **DON'T PANIC**, apply enough pressure with a damp 2x2 inch sterile sponge to cut off circulation. Keep applying this pressure for a minimum of 5 minutes. If you are wearing a plastic stent to cover the palate, put that in and apply pressure on the stent to stop the bleeding. This type of bleeding may occur from time to time for up to a week after the surgery.

It is important that you maintain a good, nutritious diet. Often times it is of benefit to take a multi-vitamin, mineral supplement during the first week after surgery. This will help guarantee that you are getting all of the healing components necessary for successful surgery, such as vitamin C and zinc.

The palate will also be much more comfortable during healing and heal more rapidly if you avoid spicy foods, acidic foods, and sugar or salt. Smoking affects the circulation of the graft and may cause the graft to slough or die resulting in recession. It is very important that you cut back or stop any smoking during the healing phase of the surgery. Ideally, you should not smoke for three weeks following any soft tissue graft surgery.

It is also very important not to disturb the graft site during the first few days of healing. If a dressing is placed over this area, do not disturb that dressing. Keep ice over the grafted site, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off, during the first day of surgery. This will reduce swelling. It is normal to have swelling, as well as some bruising, over the area where the graft sites were done. The day after surgery is the time to begin using the Peridex rinse that was prescribed. Do not use a toothbrush at or on the grafted site during the first three weeks after surgery. Begin brushing the rest of the mouth, avoiding the site of surgery. Do not disturb nor try to brush around the stitches where the graft was placed. Any additional questions, please call our office at 972-394-1234 for a detailed explanation.

