

## Post-Operative Instructions

While you are healing after treatment, please know that no question or concern is too small. You can reach me 8AM – 5PM M-F on our office phone (859) 252-7726, or after hours call or text my cell phone (859) 361-5255.

### PAIN PREVENTION

[Narcotic pain medication cannot be called-in over the phone per Kentucky state law.]

For most procedures we prescribe a steroid (Methylprednisolone Tablets, Medrol Dosepak®). The instructions for taking this medication can be found inside the prescription box written directly on the pack of tablets. If you fill this prescription after your procedure, you should take 3 tablets right away and 3 more tablets before bed.

If you are not given a prescription for a steroid, we recommend taking an NSAID (naproxen or ibuprofen). You do NOT need to combine the use of an NSAID and a steroid [The one exception is if you take a daily baby aspirin, which you should continue to take in addition to the steroid.] Naproxen (Aleve®)\* is preferable to ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)\*\*, as naproxen has a more sustained effect.

You should also take acetaminophen (Tylenol® Regular Strength 325mg) in addition to either the steroid or an NSAID. Any pain medication we prescribe will have 2 drugs mixed into the tablet, a narcotic and acetaminophen. After taking a narcotic, you should never drive or drink alcohol until the following day. Therefore, until you are able to stay home for the remainder of the day, you should take 2 tablets of acetaminophen 325mg in place of the prescription pain medication. The goal is to prevent pain, as it is more difficult to manage pain following its onset. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you **follow the schedule below for taking these medications for at least 4 days even if you are not experiencing pain.**

(Ty) = 325mg tablet acetaminophen (Tylenol®)

(Rx) = Prescription Pain Medication

(Al) = 220mg tablet naproxen (Aleve®)

Morning Appointment		Afternoon Appointment	
12pm	2 (Ty) or Rx	4pm	2 (Ty) or Rx
4pm	2 (Ty) or Rx	8pm	2 (Ty) or Rx
8pm	1 (Al)* AND 2 (Ty) or Rx	Before bed	1 (Al)* AND 2 (Ty) or Rx
Before Bed	2 (Ty) or Rx		
Next 3 Days			
7am	1 (Al)* AND 2 (Ty) or Rx		
11am	2 (Ty) or Rx		
3pm	2 (Ty) or Rx		
7pm	1 (Al)* AND 2 (Ty) or Rx		
Before bed	2 (Ty) or Rx		

\* if you receive a Rx for a steroid DO NOT take an NSAID (Advil® or Aleve®) in addition to the steroid (i.e. take the steroid as directed on the label and skip the (Al)s on the schedule above)

\*\* if you prefer to take ibuprofen (Advil®) instead of naproxen (Aleve®), 400mg of ibuprofen may be taken every 4 hours in between doses of Ty or Rx (i.e. 2 hours after each dose of Ty or Rx)

### ANTIBIOTICS

The use of antibiotics is NOT indicated following gum grafting procedures or deep surgical cleanings. If your procedure involved the placement of a dental implant or bone graft you will likely be given a prescription for an antibiotic. Please alert the office to any allergies or sensitivities that you might have to antibiotics. Take the prescribed antibiotic as directed until gone. It is advisable not to take these medications on an empty stomach, as nausea may result. For women taking birth control pills, please be advised: while taking the antibiotics, birth control pills will lose their effectiveness.

### SWELLING

Swelling and/or bruising may occur following your surgical procedure and typically peaks approximately 2-3 days after the procedure. To minimize the swelling please follow these recommendations:

- Do not exercise for a minimum of 24 hours after the procedure.
- Elevate your head when lying down (use an extra pillow when sleeping).
- For the next 6 hours, apply an ice pack to your cheek every 20 minutes followed by a 20 minute break

## **BLEEDING**

Do not spit or drink through a straw for 24 hours following the procedure.

A small amount of bleeding is normal. If excessive or continuous bleeding occurs:

- Elevate your head when lying down.
- Apply moistened gauze to the immediate area with moderate pressure for 20 minutes; repeat if necessary. **UNLESS THERE IS BLEEDING FROM THE SITE WHERE A GUM GRAFT WAS PLACED**, in which case, place finger pressure on the outside of your face over the grafted area for 20 minutes.
- Please contact us if the bleeding persists.

## **STITCHES**

We use two different types of stitches (suture material). The first type of suture is tan-colored and will dissolve, or may begin to unravel, after 4 - 7 days. The second type of suture is blue in color and will not dissolve. These type of sutures will be removed at your 1-2 week post-operative exam. After a few days, you may notice one of your sutures starting to unravel. Never PULL a loose suture. You may carefully trim loose sutures with a pair of small scissors, or contact our office and we will be happy to trim any loose sutures for you.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking during the healing phase of treatment will greatly compromise the ability to achieve a successful outcome. It is especially important to point out that, following a gum grafting procedure, if you smoke during the first 2 weeks of healing, the graft will almost certainly not survive.

## **EATING**

Avoid chewing on the side where surgery was completed until your 1-2 week post-op appointment. A soft diet is generally recommended. Foods such as cottage cheese, oatmeal, soup, eggs, yogurt, pasta, mashed potatoes, and casseroles are more easily eaten. Remember, adequate nutrition is essential for feeling better as well as for optimal healing. If you had a gum graft placed or treatment in the front of your mouth, you should avoid the following foods during the healing period: popcorn, apples, potato chips, corn on the cob, and granola.

## **CLEANING**

\_\_\_\_\_ No brushing or flossing near the surgical area until your 1-2 week post-op appointment. Please brush and floss the rest of the teeth as usual.

\_\_\_\_\_ No flossing, but perform cautious brushing until your 1-2 week post-op appointment. Avoiding touching the gums, place the bristles gently against the tooth close to the gumline, and swipe away from the gums. Keeping the teeth clean will help prevent soreness of the gums and lead to faster healing. Please brush and floss the rest of the teeth as usual.

## **GUM GRAFTING**

At the site where a gum graft is placed, the grafted tissue will undergo many changes during the first 1-2 weeks of healing. We generally recommend not looking at the graft until your post-op appointment. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** to avoid pulling your lip down (even by just using your facial muscles to move your lip out of the way)! NEVER touch the graft with your fingers or toothbrush. Also, please remember that if you smoke during the first 2 weeks of healing, the graft will almost certainly not survive. Depending on the type of gum graft, you may have a periodontal dressing placed, which is a thin, rubber-like protective barrier. Its only purpose is to make things more comfortable for you while healing. Once the dressing starts to come loose, you may carefully remove it. If you experience discomfort without it, please contact our office and Dr. Neuman will be happy to replace it. After the first day or two, the graft will turn from pink to white, and patients are often concerned that the graft is either dying or has fallen off. Please know that these changes are completely normal. During the next 1-2 weeks portions of the graft will change from white to red, until eventually the entire graft is red and slightly swollen. After 2 weeks, the graft will turn from red to pink as the swelling decreases. Eventually the borders of the graft will fade away and blend in with the surrounding gums. Dr. Neuman prefers to see you 6 weeks after your post-op appointment to evaluate the final result. If you have concerns at any point during the healing, please do not hesitate to contact us, and Dr. Neuman will be happy to answer any questions you have.