



SOFT TISSUE GRAFT SURGERY

Soft Tissue Graft Surgery Information

After a careful assessment of your periodontal condition, you may have been advised that you have significant gum recession and with this condition, further recession of the gum may occur. In addition, for fillings at the gum-line or crowns with edges under the gum-line, it is important to have sufficient width of attached gum to withstand the irritation caused by the fillings or edges. Gum tissue may also be placed to improve the appearance and to protect roots of the teeth.

To treat this condition, soft tissue grafting surgery will be performed in areas of your mouth with significant gum recession. A local anaesthetic will be administered as part of the treatment which involves the transplanting of a thin strip/piece of soft tissue from the roof of your mouth or from the adjacent teeth. This tissue can be placed at the base of the remaining gum, or it can be placed to partially cover the tooth root surface exposed by recession. A periodontal bandage or dressing or an upper removable protective dressing appliance may be placed but this is dependent on the requirements of the case.

If a biomaterial such as Alloderm® is suitable and used then surgery to take a graft from the palate will not be required. There are only certain circumstances when this is an option or advised and further information on this type of graft will be provided before you start treatment.

The purpose of soft tissue graft surgery is to create an amount of attached gum tissue adequate to reduce the likelihood of further gum recession. Another purpose for this procedure may be to cover

exposed root surfaces, to enhance the appearance or to prevent or treat root sensitivity or root decay.

Possible complications associated with Soft Tissue Graft Surgery

Some patients do not respond successfully to soft tissue graft surgery. If a soft tissue graft is placed to partially cover the tooth root surface exposed by the recession, the gum placed over the root may shrink back during healing. In such a case, the attempt to cover the exposed root surface may not be completely successful. Indeed, in some cases, it may result in more recession with increased spacing between the teeth. Complications may result from soft tissue graft surgery (surgical manipulation of the soft gum tissues) or local anaesthetic. These complications include, but are not limited to post-surgical infection, bleeding, swelling and pain, facial discoloration, transient but on occasion permanent tooth sensitivity to hot, cold, sweet or acidic foods, allergic reactions, and accidental swallowing of foreign matter.

There is no method that will accurately predict or evaluate how your gums and bone will heal and there may be a need for a second procedure if the initial surgery is not satisfactory. In addition, the success of soft tissue graft surgery can be affected by medical conditions, dietary and nutritional problems, smoking, alcohol consumption, clenching and grinding of teeth, inadequate oral hygiene and medications that you may be taking. Your diligence in providing effective daily plaque control and oral hygiene and taking the prescribed medications are important to the ultimate success of the procedure.

There will be some pain and discomfort after your surgery. Postoperative pain can sometimes be mild, moderate or severe, depending on the nature of treatment and an individual patient's pain threshold. You will be provided with pain control advice after your surgery as part of normal post-operative instructions.



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Important Information for smokers

It is essential that you do not smoke for at least three days, or ideally the first week after your surgery as it increases the risk of infections and complications following surgery. Smoking leads to a slower and more painful recovery. If you continue to smoke your treatment results could be poor and persistence and/or recurrence of the inflammatory periodontal disease could occur even on previously treated and stabilised sites around teeth/implants.

Smoking or failure to keep the mouth clean can result in severe infections, which in some cases may lead to admissions to hospital and further surgery.

General pre-operative information and advice

Surgery inside the mouth should be treated as seriously as any other surgical procedure.

After surgery, you may encounter some of the following side effects:

- Difficulty in opening your mouth fully may occur for up to one week.
- You may require some time off work (2/3 days is usually sufficient).
- You may have difficulty in eating normal foods for up to one week. Soft foods are advisable for the first few days.
- You may require antibiotics, current best practice guidelines suggest this is not routine.
- In very rare cases, infection or swelling

may occur – This may lead to admission to hospital for further surgical treatment. If this is required it will be arranged through the Emergency Dental Service or through the practice.

You may want to bring another responsible adult with you. Bringing children with you may be difficult.

It may also be useful to have Ibuprofen and Paracetamol (500mg) tablets. It is useful to take some form of pain relief (preferably Ibuprofen) 30 minutes before your appointment. Ibuprofen cannot be taken if you suffer from asthma or a stomach ulcer.

Remember to eat normally before your appointment to avoid fainting.

Soft Tissue Graft Surgery Guarantee Information

No guarantee, warranty or assurance is given that the proposed treatment will be successful. In most cases the treatment should provide benefit in reducing the cause of your condition and should produce healing which will help you keep teeth. Due to individual patient differences, however, a periodontist cannot predict the absolute certainty of success. There exists the risk of failure, relapse, additional treatment, or worsening of the present condition, including the possible loss of certain teeth, despite the best of care.

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