

Bone Graft -Post Op Instructions

During most dental surgical procedures, attached gums that surround the necks of teeth are loosened and cleaned. To aid in initial healing, the **loose gum tissue** is lightly held in place by sutures. This repositioned loose gum tissue is essential to normal healing as it covers, seals, and nourishes (carries blood supply) to the: tooth root, tooth supporting bone, and the graft materials. It is very important not to disturb the loose gum tissue, because you could dislodge the tissue and compromise the success of the graft.

1. As to **avoid trauma to loose gum tissue** please follow our instructions regarding oral hygiene and Diet.
2. **Avoid lifting the lip** with your fingers to look at the area. It is possible to accidentally tear the sutures, open the incision, and delay healing.
3. **Do not apply any finger or tongue pressure** inside or outside of your mouth in the area of your mouth that just received a Bone or Gum Graft.
4. Fragile mucous clots form at the borders of the loose gum tissue and some minor white patches may be visible early in the healing process. **Do not disturb or rinse out these clots or white patches.** This is typical healing for human tissue.
5. **Avoid facial expressions**, because muscles used during facial expressions will lift and pull your cheeks and lips. Since your cheeks and lips are connected to your oral mucosa and the gums that surround your teeth, facial expressions can loosen or rip sutures, and potentially lift or pull gums away from the necks of teeth and off of the graft.

If you follow the above instructions you will greatly increase your odds of healing normally. **Gum tissue healing occurs two different ways:** "primary intention" and "secondary intention." "Primary intention" is normal healing. During normal healing the loose gum tissue remains vital and stays in place next to the necks of the teeth. Unfortunately some patients will heal by secondary intention. Secondary intention healing means that the loose gum tissue is pulled away and/or dies and new gum tissue grows off of the top of the tooth supporting bone. **Secondary intention healing is much more painful**, and takes longer time period to heal (2-4 weeks).

As an additional protective measure, many bone grafts will be held in place and protected by a bonded Resin composite or **temporary acrylic stent**. Adjacent teeth or a tray typically help to secure this braced stent. This stent can get loose and may even fall out. Following the directions above, do your best to keep this stent in position as long as possible (2-14 days).

Misc.

- **It's normal to find little "flake like" pieces of the bone graft material** in your mouth. It's common to find "flake like" pieces lodged in the gum tissues around the graft site.
- **Take your Antibiotics & Periogard mouth rinse as directed.**
- **Average healing time** for the surgical area is 4-6 weeks. Average healing time for a Bone Graft is 2-3 months.

Healing Times Bone Grafts: There is no method in order to accurately predict the gum and bone healing capabilities in each patient following the placement of a bone graft. Your bone graft will be evaluated at your suture removal appointment. At this time, Dr Landers will be better able to predict a time frame for healing. In the event patients exhibit post treatment infections or delayed healing times, Dr Landers may put you on different medications and/or recall you for another evaluation appointment. Again healing times will be updated based on your own individual ability to heal. Most patients heal in approximately 3 months and are ready for implant placement. Smoking, personal stress, alcohol, or drug consumption, or blood sugar levels may affect gum and bone healing and may limit the success of the bone graft and/or dental implants.

Note For Patients Who's Next Step Is Implant Placement

We recommend that you **return after 3 months for an evaluation appointment**. Bone grafts after sinus lifts should return 6 months later for evaluation. At this appointment, an x-ray will be taken and your healing will be evaluated. And if you so desire, we can schedule your next appointment for man-made root placement (dental implant). It's very important that patients understand that the bone graft and tooth supporting bone will slowly dissolve without the pressure of the dental implant. For the later reason, patients need to place the dental implant in a timely fashion in order to prevent loss of bone over time.

Our philosophy

Our office remains dedicated to providing optimal care for every patient and working with you to achieve that goal. We pride ourselves on helping you in any way and in continuing to provide the quality of care to which you have become accustomed.