

MOUTH CARE AFTER GUM SURGICAL TREATMENT

Before your appointment

- Get a good night's sleep and eat a light breakfast/lunch at the usual time.
- Take a single dose of a mild painkiller 1 hour before the appointment.
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For the rest of the day –

- **Take care:** do not bite the inside of your mouth as it may remain numb for 2-3 hours.
- **Any discomfort:** is temporary as the local anaesthetic wears off. Take the normal dose of a mild painkiller (e.g., Ibuprofen, Paracetamol or Codeine).
- **Eating:** Wait until the feeling has returned to your mouth. Eat well and you will feel well. Chew on the opposite side of your mouth and drink lots of fluids. Choose a soft nutritious diet (eggs, fish, high protein instant drinks, soups, yoghurts), avoiding hot food, spices and sharp tastes.
- **Bleeding:** Slight oozing may occur, but should stop soon afterwards (within 30 minutes). Avoid vigorous exercise and alcohol. Avoid rinsing or sucking on the area. Do not pull at your lip or cheek to have a look.
- **If bleeding persists:** Keep calm and rinse gently with cold water. Roll up a clean wet handkerchief or gauze, press it firmly over the area and hold it there by your thumb and forefinger for about 30 minutes.
- **Medication:** continue to take all tablets and medicines prescribed by your doctor or dentist.
- **Oral hygiene:** Do not brush the treated area. Continue to clean all your other teeth using your normal method. Use chlorhexidine rinse gently 1 hour after tooth brushing. **Do not smoke.**

The next few days: -

- **Discomfort:** will get better soon. Continue with a mild painkiller if necessary. Do not worry if your mouth looks slightly bruised around the treated area.
- **Oral Hygiene:** effective plaque control is very important for rapid and complete healing. Start to gently clean the treated area with a toothbrush. Any bleeding on brushing will soon reduce. Wait another week before flossing or using interdental brushes.
- **Daily Routine:** smokers should quit for as long as possible while the gums are healing.
- **Chlorhexidine mouthwash:** used twice daily for a full minute, will reduce infection until you can start tooth brushing the treated area. Wait one hour after using fluoride toothpaste or salt-water mouth rinsing. Any staining of the teeth can be polished away later by your dentist.
- **Salt water mouth rinse:** this is optional but helps reduce pain and inflammation.
 - Dissolve a level teaspoon of table salt in a cup of warm water, gently flush a mouthful of the solution between and around the teeth, spit it out and repeat until finished.

The following weeks

- **Appearance:** as the signs of inflammation reduce and the swollen tissues start to heal you may notice that the roots of the teeth become exposed and small spaces appear between the teeth.
- **Sensitivity:** to cold and hot food and drink may occur as the gums shrink and expose the roots. The sensitivity is rarely intense and should get better over several weeks with good oral hygiene. Apply fluoride toothpaste directly to the teeth after lunch and during the day and do not rinse it off.

If in doubt:

- In the first instance contact your dentist for appropriate advice if you are concerned that healing is not going well, (persistent bleeding, severe swelling or pain).