

Periodontal Surgery

What is it?

- Periodontal surgery is a collective term for a number of surgical procedures involving the gums. The exact nature of your surgery will be discussed with you personally, this pamphlet will set out the basics, common to most forms of periodontal surgery.
- Most periodontal surgery involves cutting the gums to gain access to the underlying teeth and bone. At the end of the procedure the gum is placed back around the teeth and usually held in place with small stitches (sutures)

What should I do before my surgery?

- It is important to continue to take any medications you may be taking in the normal way. (You will be told if there is any need to vary from this).

Continue to take your medications normally

- It is very important to tell us if you are taking any new medications, since we last saw you.
- Do ensure you eat normally on the day of your surgery, although it is best not to eat a very heavy meal before your surgery appointment.
- Do ensure you keep your mouth (and particularly the surgical area) clean before your surgery. This is particularly important if you wear a denture. Make sure you take your denture out at night and clean it and any part of your mouth that is covered by the denture.

- If you smoke try to minimise the amount of smoking you do in the few days prior your surgery and ideally quit altogether.

What is going to happen?

- At your surgical appointment, the area in your mouth will be made numb with local anaesthetic, in the same manner as when you have a filling. The local anaesthetic will last throughout the procedure and usually will not wear off until 1-2 hours after your surgery (you will be told exactly how long to expect for your particular procedure). No cutting of the gum will be undertaken until the area is completely numb. You should feel no pain during the procedure, and you will be fully awake and able to move and talk, although keeping this to a minimum will obviously speed the process.

You will be fully awake

- Surgical procedures use an aseptic technique (as the mouth is never sterile) requiring the wearing of gowns, gloves, masks and protective eye wear. All the equipment and materials used in your mouth throughout the procedure are sterilised by before the procedure.

All equipment is sterilised

- During the surgery, there is normally only a minimal amount of bleeding, (due to the use of vasoconstrictors in the local anaesthetic). Any blood and saline used to wash the area will be immediately sucked from your mouth by the assistant.
- Some surgery requires the removal of a small amount of bone (usually a few millimetres). If this is the case, the bone will usually be removed using a drill identical to that used by your dentist when doing a filling on a tooth.
- Depending on what you are having done most surgery appointments take between 1 and 2 hours. You will be told how long to expect for your

particular surgery. At the end of the surgical procedure, your gum will be carefully placed back into position and held in place with small stitches (these are usually surgical silk, nylon or a slow dissolving material). Sometimes a surgical dressing (like a piece of chewing gum) will be placed over the surgical area.

What Happens After the Surgery?

- At the end of your appointment, you will be able to walk out of the surgery and drive home. Some patients may prefer to be accompanied by some one, but this is not usually necessary. You should be able to return to work, as long as you are not doing anything that is physically strenuous.
- Depending on where in your mouth your surgery is performed it may show when you speak or it may not. Every effort will be made to ensure the surgical site is kept as small as possible, so that it will be as aesthetic as possible.
- The surgical site will remain numb for some time after the surgery and your lip area will also feel numb and thick, but will look normal. The numbness may or may not affect your speech, but it is best not to eat or drink anything hot while your lip is still numb (to prevent you accidentally biting or damaging your lip).
- You will be given further instructions on how to look after yourself in the week following your surgery
- Your stitches (and any dressing) will usually be removed one week after your surgery. This is a simple but important procedure and usually only takes a few minutes. It is important to check on the healing at this stage and to determine if any further reviews will be necessary.

What could happen after the surgery?

- Post operative complications are fairly rare but do occur. It is important you contact the surgery if you are concerned about any of these problems.

- **Pain.** It is normal to expect some discomfort after the local anaesthetic wears off. You will be advised of a suitable analgesic to take, and it is usually best to take this medication before you feel any significant pain rather than waiting for the pain to really develop. Never take more than the recommended dose. If your pain is not reducing after the first 2 days you should contact the surgery. Increasing pain may be a sign of infection, either of the surgical site, or an awakening of a previously dormant infection in an adjacent tooth.
- **Swelling.** It is normal to have some swelling around the surgical area. This is usually at its maximum 1 to 2 days after the surgery. Ice packs applied to the face over the surgical area for the first 24 hours after surgery will help to minimise the amount of swelling you develop.
- **Ulcers.** Sometimes a series of small but painful ulcers will emerge either over or adjacent to the area of the surgery. These ulcers are usually caused by the Herpes Simplex Virus (the same virus that causes cold sores). Most adults have been exposed to this virus during their lives and may harbour it (in a dormant state) in their bodies even if they don't usually show any outward signs. Surgical procedures can sometimes activate this dormant virus resulting in the small ulcers. Fortunately, the ulcers while annoying, go away by themselves after 7-10 days and leave no scar.
- **Bleeding.** Occasionally after the local anaesthetic wears off there will be some slight oozing from the surgical site. This is usually easily controlled with firm pressure applied with a wet handkerchief for about 10-15 minutes. If bleeding persists it is important to contact the surgery.
- **Infection.** Although rare, infection of the surgical wound can occur, from food etc. It is important to follow your post operative care instructions carefully in respect of keeping things clean. Signs of infection may be increasing pain and swelling, and bad taste or smell. If you suspect you have an infection please contact the surgery.

SMOKERS

- It is important for the success of your surgery that you keep your smoking both before and after your surgery to a minimum.
- You can expect to get a better result if you stop smoking altogether
- Smokers take longer to heal than non smokers
- Smokers have a higher rate of post-operative complications

**IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS
ABOUT ANY OF THE
INFORMATION IN THIS PAMPHLET
PLEASE, FEEL FREE TO ASK ANY
QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR
PARTICULAR CASE, AT ANY
STAGE.**



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What is it all about?

The information contained in this pamphlet is general in nature and is intended only as a general guide. Please ask any specific questions you may have about your particular case