

CAIRNS ORAL SURGERY

Dr. Brian Finn B.D.S., M.D.S., M.B.B.S., F.R.A.C.D.S. (OMS)

BONE GRAFT INFORMATION

Bone grafts are frequently harvested from various sites around the jaw bones to assist with long term placement of implants in an ideal anatomical position. The grafts are used to restore normal anatomy following the loss of teeth with an associated loss of bone or alternatively following the traumatic loss of tissues from an injury, infection, etc. The process involves harvesting shavings bone from an area such as the “angle” of the jaw or a wisdom tooth site and transposing this to another part of the jaw where the graft is usually fixed into position with a bio guide. Grafts normally require a minimum of 4 months to heal before scanning to check bone density for which following an implant can be inserted and generally implants are not inserted until such time as the grafts have completely consolidated. Patients then return to theatre implant surgery as appropriate. Where large grafts are required, other distant sites such as the iliac crest may be utilised.

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Post Surgery:

1. HYGIENE/CARE OF WOUNDS

If food and plaque are allowed to accumulate around the wounds and along the suture lines there is a very real chance the graft will become infected or lost. It is ESSENTIAL to maintain a very high standard of oral hygiene using a combination of salt water mouth rinses and regular toothbrushing. You should commence your rinses and toothbrushing the day AFTER surgery and you should aim to rinses every two (2) hours for the initial 48 hours following every meal and before bed there after. Gentle toothbrushing around the wounds may cause a small amount of bleeding, but it is important to remove food debris and plaque from the area of the wounds.

2. DRESSINGS.

Generally dressings are not used with bone graft surgery however you will be supplied with mouth packs to assist with possible post-operative bleeding.

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3. SWELLING AND BRUISING.

Some swelling and bruising should be expected following the harvesting of a bone graft. Generally swelling takes up to three days to reach its maximum then this will slowly subside over about ten days. Bruising can be unpredictable and may vary from some minor facial bruising to more extensive bruising that may extend to the orbits or down the neck. The bruises slowly discolour with time and may take 10-14 days to disappear. Ice packs should be applied regularly to the face over the first 48 hours.

4. NUMBNESS.

Local anaesthetic injections are used during your surgery and when you recover you will notice parts of your face are quite numb. This is normal and is done deliberately as a pain control measure. The numbness will take 6-8 hours to wear off and during that time you should avoid contact with hot liquids etc. Bone grafting procedures occasionally cause stretching and injuries to some of the surrounding nerves in the jaw bones and you may notice some prolonged numbness, which can take up to three months to resolve.

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In severe cases the numbness may take up to 18 months to settle and on occasions there may even be some permanently altered sensation particularly near the graft donor site.

5. BLEEDING.

On occasions bleeding may occur from a grafted site, either the donor or recipient site. You will be provided with mouth packs to take home for use as pressure packs. These should be placed over the wounds and pressure applied by biting firmly on the packs. The hospital will supply you with some spare pressure packs to take home. Rest quietly with your head ELEVATED and if the oozing or bleeding does not stop within 30 minutes please contact the hospital in which you were treated.

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6. DIET.

Your diet will be restricted to soft foods (e.g. eggs, pasta, rice, soup) for up to 5 days, where little chewing is required, until the swelling and discomfort subsides. If weight loss is a problem or you can only tolerate fluids, then consider milk fortified with eggs, skim milk powder as well as Sustagen from your local pharmacy.

7. SMOKING.

You **MUST NOT SMOKE AT ALL** following a bone grafting procedure into the mouth. Smoking is well recognised as a major factor in the loss of bone grafts. Patients who are smokers will be advised they must cease smoking at least three months prior to any bone grafting procedure and **MUST NOT SMOKE AT ALL** following the surgery and the subsequent placement of implants.

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8. SPECIAL ASPECTS.

You MUST NOT WEAR YOUR DENTURE OR ANY OTHER PROSTHESIS for at least 2-3 weeks following a bone grafting procedure into the mouth. It may be possible to wear a temporary bridge for an anterior tooth in special circumstances by 2 weeks post-op but our doctors will discuss this in detail at the time of your surgery. If you wear your dentures too early there is a very real chance of causing wound breakdown and infection and/or loss of the bone graft.

9. POST-OPERATIVE MEDICATIONS AND SUPPLIES ETC.

You will be provided with the following on discharge:

a) A course of antibiotics.

You will have been given intravenous antibiotics in the operating theatre and sometimes on the ward post-operatively. A prescription for your oral antibiotics will be available for you to take home or alternatively the ward may have the prescription filled for you before discharge. IT IS ESSENTIAL YOU COMPLETE ALL OF THE ANTIBIOTICS as indicated on the label.

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b) Analgesics.

These are also prescribed and the prescription will be available for you to take home or, as with the antibiotics, the ward may have the prescription filled for you before discharge. Generally “middle of the range” analgesics are satisfactory for pain control following intraoral bone grafting.

10. PROBLEMS.

After carefully reading the above information, please CALL THE PRACTICE if ;

- You experience excessive discomfort that you cannot control by your tablets.
- You have bleeding that you cannot control by biting on gauze.
- You have increasing swelling after the third day following surgery.
- You have a temperature greater than 38 degrees (use a thermometer).

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11. FOLLOW-UP CARE.

It is important that all patients are seen for follow-up and generally an appointment will have been made for you to attend our rooms around a week post-op. Frequently the sutures used for bone graft surgery need to be removed no sooner than ten days following placement. This is a painless procedure as the sutures stay wet in the mouth and are easy to remove. It is not uncommon for sutures to fall out and this is not a matter for concern. If you do not have an appointment please telephone the practice on 07 4051 3838 to make a post-operative appointment.

12. EMERGENCIES

If you have any concerns following your surgery please do not hesitate to contact our rooms 07 4051 3838. If for some reason this is not possible, there is a 24 hour emergency department at the Cairns Base Hospital 07 4226 0000.