

## **What is Bone Grafting?**

This procedure is often performed in conjunction with or in preparation for dental implants. This may be needed in areas where there is complete lack of bone to place any implants OR a partial lack of bone where implants may be able to be placed but the outcome may be less than optimal. In most cases, a mixture of bovine bone with some locally harvested particulate autogenous (your own) bone can be used to improve the volume of bone. Where there is insufficient local bone present, the autogenous graft may require surgical harvesting from a distant site in the mouth. This procedure has additional surgical risks. The risks include swelling, discomfort, pain, numbness, or altered sensation at the harvest site distant from where the implants were placed. Bone grafting may delay the timeframe for the second implant stage to 9-12 months. Where extensive grafting or a shorter time frame is required, an adjunctive process of deriving growth factors from your own blood (Platelet-rich Plasma) can be used to accelerate and promote bone and gingival healing and maturation. This procedure may attract an additional cost. In some circumstances "Block Grafting" may be required from a different part of the body. Referral to a maxillofacial surgeon may be required, and the overall timeframe is generally increased to 12-15 months. The risks for complications are significant in smokers, and smoking is prohibited altogether during the initial 3 months of healing. GTR is a procedure often used in conjunction with bone grafting, involving locally isolating bone from the overlying gums by using a special membrane barrier. It works by avoiding soft tissue migration or compression and creating a "space" into which bone can "grow". Numerous types of barrier membranes are available. In most cases, the membrane is dissolvable. Where a non-dissolvable or titanium-reinforced membrane is used, the membrane will require removal after about 4-6 months.

Placement of a membrane increases the risks for infection and strict adherence to the prescribed Oral Hygiene and medication protocols is required.

## **Bone grafting aftercare**

Following a bone graft procedure:

- The bone graft is made up of many particles. Patient may find some small granules in the mouth over the next few days and it is not uncommon to experience this
- Swelling is normal and usually peaks around 48 hours post surgery and may last for 3-4 days. Keeping the head elevated with 2 pillows when lying down can minimize facial swelling. Swelling can also be minimized by applying cold ice packs to the face (30 minutes on, 30 minutes off)

- Bruising may occur within 24 to 48 hours following surgery. This will subside within the first week of surgery
- It is not uncommon to experience bleeding following surgery. If you notice you are bleeding you can apply gauze to the area and apply constant/firm pressure for 30 minutes. If you continue to bleed please reapply the gauze and firm pressure for a further 30 minutes. If you are still concerned following this, please contact us.
- You may experience some pain and discomfort following the surgery. Please ensure you are taking your prescribed medication as instructed to assist with minimizing the amount of discomfort.

Following your bone grafting surgery please ensure:

- Soft, mild and nutritionally balanced diet. This will aid in the healing of your soft tissues around the grafting site. Soft diet is to be consumed for the first 6 weeks following surgery.
- Patient is to avoid vigorously rinsing the mouth or spitting for the first 3-5 days as they do not want to disrupt the blood clot that will form in the area.
- Avoid brushing the area for the first day following the surgery.
- No touching the area and sutures with the tongue or fingers