

SOFT TISSUE GRAFTING

Gingival recession is a progressive dental condition where gum tissue begins to recede or pull away from the teeth. As the recession advances, the roots of the teeth become exposed. This condition develops over time, so many people do not realize they have a problem until it is diagnosed by a dental professional. Once recession is present, it tends to progress rapidly. The exposed root surfaces are at higher risk of developing decay as the surface is softer and less resistant than the enamel surface. Another common sequelae of recession is increased sensitivity to hot/cold foods and drinks and poor esthetics.

Soft tissue grafting can address receding gums and help prevent bone loss that could jeopardize your teeth. Grafting can also improve the appearance of your smile.

Types of gum tissue grafts that can be performed include:

- **Free Gingival Graft:** A portion of tissue is taken from the roof of the mouth and secured over the area with recession. The goal with this is to thicken the tissue as well as obtain root coverage.
- **Connective Tissue Graft:** The connective tissue middle layer is removed from the roof of the mouth and is secured under the gums around the teeth that have gingival recession.
- **Allograft:** A graft material that is gathered from donated human tissue that is medically processed and sterilized is used as a replacement for your own tissue. One of the primary benefits of this type of graft is that it is less painful to collect as we are not impacting the roof of the mouth.

The day of the procedure the doctor will use a local anesthetic to numb the area being treated. Once you are properly numb, the teeth affected by the recession are thoroughly cleaned and prepared to accept the grafted tissue. If you choose to use your own tissue from the roof of the mouth, that area is also numbed so that you cannot feel any discomfort when the tissue is harvested. Stitches are placed to secure the graft around the recession defects and prevent it from moving.

When fully recovered, your gums will be returned to a healthy level that protects the underlying area from additional damage and alleviate any sensitivity you might have.

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What to expect:

- Prescriptions
- Root coverage
- Sensitive to temperature
- Mild/moderate discomfort
- Inflammation
- Sutures
- Post-op appointments
- If you take ASPIRIN, continue to take it
- If you take blood thinning medications, please follow your periodontist and doctor's instructions on taking it prior to surgery

Pre op instructions:

- No caffeine the day of procedure
- No alcohol the day before and day of the procedure
- No smoking at least 1 week prior to and after procedure.

Post op instructions:

- No pulling the lip to look at the surgical site
- Do not brush surgical site; use a soft toothbrush
- Ice pack for first 24 hours only, 10 min on/10 min off to reduce swelling
- No flossing or water flossing in the surgical site
- No straws for 1 week
- No hot or crunchy foods immediately after surgery as you will be numb
- Soft food diet for 2 weeks - avoid hard, crunchy, sticky foods, no biting into anything like a sandwich (cut up into pieces)
- Wear NG or occlusal guard after periodontist allows it
- Use damp gauze to apply pressure to the site if bleeding
- Can use a moist black tea bag to help stop bleeding
- For pain control and reduction of swelling, take 600 mg Ibuprofen (this is 3 over the counter 200mg tablets), wait 3 hours then take 500mg Tylenol (1 over the counter tablet) and continue to alternate medications every 3 hours. If this does not control your pain, take the 600 mg ibuprofen and 500 mg Tylenol at the same time, every 6 hrs.
- If medications were prescribed, please follow the instructions on the bottle for their use.