JACKSONVILLE
SURGICAL ARTS
ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

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PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Alveolar Ridge Augmentation (Bone Grafting) Prior to Dental Implants

ABOUT YOUR PROCEDURE

You are scheduled for alveolar ridge augmentation — a bone grafting procedure to rebuild the jawbone in preparation for future dental implant placement. When teeth are lost, the surrounding jawbone gradually shrinks (resorbs), and there may no longer be enough bone to safely place dental implants. Ridge augmentation restores the height, width, or both of the jawbone so that implants can be placed in the ideal position for the best long-term result.

This is a staged procedure, meaning the bone graft must heal and mature for several months before dental implants can be placed at a separate appointment. The healing period is critical — the graft needs time to integrate with your existing bone and develop a blood supply before it can support an implant.

Please read the following instructions carefully and contact our office with any questions.

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Inform our office of any changes to your medical history, including new diagnoses, hospitalizations, or surgeries since your last visit.
- Provide a complete and updated list of all medications you are currently taking, including:
  - Prescription medications
  - Over-the-counter medications (including aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen)
  - Vitamins, herbal supplements, and nutritional products
  - Blood thinners (warfarin, Eliquis, Xarelto, Plavix, or others)
- **VERY IMPORTANT ⚠ Bone-Affecting Medications:** If you take or have ever taken any of the following medications, please inform our office immediately, as special precautions are required:
  - Bisphosphonates (Fosamax, Boniva, Actonel, Reclast, or Zometa)
  - Denosumab (Prolia or Xgeva)
  - Romosozumab (Evenity)
  - Any medication prescribed for osteoporosis, bone cancer, or bone metastases

These medications can affect how your jawbone heals and may require modifications to your treatment plan.

- **Radiation or Chemotherapy:** If you have a history of radiation therapy to the head and neck area, or are currently receiving or have recently completed chemotherapy, please inform our office. These treatments can significantly affect bone healing and may require special precautions or a modified treatment plan.

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT (CONT.)

- **Heart Conditions Requiring Antibiotic Premedication:** If you have a prosthetic heart valve, a history of endocarditis, certain congenital heart conditions, or a heart transplant with valve problems, please confirm with our office that your antibiotic prescription has been arranged. Take the antibiotic exactly as directed, typically 1 hour before your appointment.
- **Steroids:** If you take oral steroids (such as prednisone or dexamethasone) or use a steroid inhaler, please inform our office, as supplemental dosing may be necessary.
- **Diabetes:** If you are diabetic, please inform our office. Good blood sugar control is critical for bone graft healing. Poorly controlled diabetes can significantly increase the risk of graft complications. Contact our office for specific instructions about adjusting your insulin or diabetes medication, especially if fasting is required for sedation.
- **Periodontal (Gum) Disease:** If you have active gum disease, it must be treated and stabilized before your bone grafting procedure. Active periodontal infections can contaminate the graft and lead to failure. If you have been referred for periodontal treatment before your surgery, please complete that treatment as directed.

MEDICATIONS — WHAT TO CONTINUE AND WHAT TO AVOID

Continue taking all regular medications unless specifically instructed otherwise by your doctor or our office.

- **Blood thinners:** Do NOT stop taking blood thinners unless specifically directed by the prescribing physician in coordination with our office. Stopping blood thinners without medical guidance can be dangerous.
- **Anti-inflammatory medications:** Unless otherwise directed, avoid aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), and other NSAIDs for 3 days before your procedure, as they may increase bleeding. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is acceptable.
- **Herbal supplements:** Stop taking fish oil, vitamin E (high dose), ginkgo biloba, garlic supplements, turmeric, and other herbal products that may increase bleeding at least 7 days before your procedure, unless otherwise directed.
- **Pre-operative antibiotic:** If you have been prescribed an antibiotic specifically for this procedure, take it exactly as directed — typically 1 hour before your appointment.

ORAL HYGIENE PREPARATION

Reducing bacteria in your mouth before surgery is essential for bone graft success. Infection is one of the most significant risks to a healing bone graft.

- If a chlorhexidine (Peridex) mouth rinse has been prescribed, begin using it as directed — typically starting 2 days before your procedure. Rinse twice daily for 30–60 seconds.
- Brush and floss all teeth thoroughly in the days leading up to your appointment.
- If you wear a denture, clean it thoroughly each day before surgery. Remove your denture at night and soak it in denture cleanser.
- If you have been scheduled for a professional cleaning or periodontal treatment before your surgery, please keep that appointment. Removing plaque and tartar before surgery reduces the bacterial load in your mouth and improves healing outcomes.
- Rinse with chlorhexidine mouth rinse the morning of your procedure.

YOUR EXISTING DENTURE OR REMOVABLE PROSTHESIS

⚠

VERY IMPORTANT

- **You will NOT be able to wear a removable denture or partial denture over the grafted area during the healing period.** Any pressure from a prosthesis on the graft site can displace the graft material, disrupt the membrane, and cause the graft to fail.
- Depending on the location and extent of the graft, you may be without a prosthesis over the surgical area for **4 weeks to several months.** Your doctor will discuss the specific timeline for your case.
- After the initial healing period, your denture may be carefully adjusted and relined with a soft material so it can be worn without placing pressure on the graft. This will be determined at a follow-up appointment.
- If the graft is in a visible area and you are concerned about appearance during the healing period, please discuss options with our office before your surgery. In some cases, a temporary solution (such as a modified flipper or essix retainer) may be possible, provided it does not contact the graft site.
- **Plan ahead —** arrange your schedule knowing that you may be without teeth in the grafted area for an extended period.

THE DAY BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE

- Do not consume alcohol for at least 24 hours before your appointment.
- Get a full night of rest.
- Fill any prescriptions provided by our office (antibiotics, pain medication, anti-inflammatory medication, medicated mouth rinse, steroid medication) so they are ready for use after your procedure.
- Purchase soft foods for your recovery. You will need to eat a **soft diet for at least 2–3 weeks,** and you should avoid chewing on the side of the graft for longer. Good options include:
  - Yogurt, applesauce, pudding, smoothies (no straws for the first week)
  - Lukewarm soup and broth (not hot for the first 48 hours)
  - Mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, oatmeal
  - Protein shakes and nutritional supplement drinks (such as Ensure or Boost)
  - Pasta, soft bread, and other foods that require minimal chewing
- If you have been prescribed an oral sedative to take the night before your procedure, take it as directed.
- If you have been prescribed a steroid (such as dexamethasone) to begin the day before surgery, take it as directed.

THE MORNING OF YOUR PROCEDURE

- **If receiving local anesthesia or nitrous oxide only:** Eat a light meal 1–2 hours before your appointment. Avoid heavy or greasy foods.
- **If receiving oral sedation:** Do not eat or drink anything for at least 6 hours before your appointment, unless otherwise instructed. Take the prescribed sedation medication as directed.
- **If receiving IV sedation or general anesthesia:** Do not eat solid food for at least 8 hours before your appointment. Clear liquids (water, apple juice without pulp — no milk) may be consumed up to 2 hours before. Do not drink anything within 2 hours of your appointment.

THE MORNING OF YOUR PROCEDURE (CONT.)

- Take your pre-operative antibiotic as directed (typically 1 hour before your appointment).
- If prescribed a steroid (dexamethasone), take it as directed.
- Rinse with chlorhexidine mouth rinse the morning of your procedure.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing with short sleeves or sleeves that roll up easily.
- Remove contact lenses, jewelry, watches, and nail polish.
- Leave valuables at home.
- Arrive at the time instructed by our office.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Local anesthesia or nitrous oxide only:** You may drive yourself to and from the appointment.
- **Oral sedation, IV sedation, or general anesthesia:** You MUST have a responsible adult drive you to and from your appointment. Your driver must remain in the office or be immediately reachable during your procedure. You will not be permitted to drive, take a taxi alone, or use rideshare services unaccompanied. A responsible adult must stay with you for several hours after you return home.

SMOKING AND TOBACCO

- Do not smoke, vape, or use any tobacco or nicotine products for at least 2 weeks before your procedure — ideally 4 weeks or longer.
- **Smoking is one of the most significant risk factors for bone graft failure.** It severely impairs blood flow to the graft, delays healing, increases the risk of wound opening (dehiscence), membrane exposure, infection, and partial or complete graft loss.
- Studies have shown that smoking increases the complication rate of ridge augmentation procedures by nearly 5-fold.
- Avoiding all tobacco and nicotine products for a minimum of 8 weeks after your procedure — and ideally permanently — is strongly recommended for the best outcome.
- If you need help quitting, please ask our office or your primary care physician about smoking cessation resources.

WHAT TO BRING

- Photo ID and insurance card
- Complete list of current medications
- Any prescribed pre-medications (antibiotics, sedatives, or steroids) if not yet taken
- Your inhaler, if you have asthma
- Your current denture or removable prosthesis (bring it even if you will not be able to wear it immediately — it may be needed for reference or future modification)
- A responsible adult driver (if receiving sedation or general anesthesia)

IF YOU ARE FEELING ILL

If you develop a fever, cold, sore throat, cough, active cold sore, nausea, vomiting, or any new illness before your appointment, please call our office as soon as possible. Your procedure may need to be rescheduled. Bone grafting procedures are particularly sensitive to infection, and performing surgery while you are ill significantly increases the risk of graft failure.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- The procedure typically takes **1–3 hours,** depending on the size and location of the graft, the type of bone graft material used, and whether bone is being harvested from another site in your mouth (such as the chin or back of the jaw).
- The surgeon will make an incision in the gum tissue, expose the deficient bone, and prepare the site by making small perforations in the existing bone to encourage blood flow to the graft.
- Bone graft material (which may include your own bone, donor bone, animal-derived bone mineral, synthetic bone, or a combination) will be placed to rebuild the ridge.
- A barrier membrane (resorbable or non-resorbable) may be placed over the graft to protect it and prevent soft tissue from growing into the graft site.
- The graft and membrane may be secured with small screws or tacks.
- The gum tissue will be carefully repositioned and sutured closed. Achieving a tension-free closure over the graft is critical for success.
- **If bone is being harvested from another site in your mouth** (donor site), you will have a second surgical area that will also require healing. You may experience additional soreness, swelling, and temporary numbness near the donor site.
- You will receive detailed post-operative instructions and any necessary prescriptions after your procedure.

HEALING TIMELINE

Understanding the healing timeline will help you plan ahead:

- **First 2 weeks:** Sutures in place. Soft diet. No brushing near the surgical site. Use chlorhexidine rinse as directed. Expect swelling, bruising, and moderate discomfort.
- **2–4 weeks:** Sutures removed (typically at 2 weeks). Gradual return to gentle brushing near the site. Continue soft diet on the surgical side.
- **1–3 months:** Continued healing. No removable prosthesis over the graft site unless specifically approved by your surgeon. Avoid hard or crunchy foods on the grafted side.
- **4–9 months:** The bone graft matures and integrates with your existing bone. Your surgeon will evaluate the graft with clinical examination and imaging (such as a CBCT scan) to determine when it is ready for implant placement.
- **Implant placement:** Once the graft has healed sufficiently, a separate appointment will be scheduled for dental implant placement.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- **Do not disturb the surgical site.** Do not touch, poke, or press on the graft area with your tongue, fingers, or any objects. Even minor pressure can displace the graft material or membrane.
- **Do not wear a removable prosthesis over the graft** unless specifically approved by your surgeon. This is the single most important instruction for protecting your graft.
- Bone graft success depends on careful preparation, strict adherence to all pre- and post-operative instructions, excellent oral hygiene, and avoiding smoking.
- You will have multiple follow-up appointments to monitor healing. Please keep all scheduled appointments — early detection of complications (such as wound opening or membrane exposure) allows for prompt treatment and can save the graft.
- If you notice any of the following, contact our office immediately:
  - Increasing pain or swelling after the first 3–4 days
  - Pus or foul-tasting drainage from the surgical site
  - Feeling of something hard or sharp poking through the gum (possible membrane or graft exposure)
  - Fever
  - Numbness that does not improve after 24 hours

If you fail to follow these instructions, your procedure may need to be postponed for your safety, or the graft may be at increased risk of failure.

If you have any questions or concerns before your appointment, please do not hesitate to call our office.

We look forward to caring for you and building a strong foundation for your future dental implants.