

Care Instructions Following a Bone Graft

Today a bone graft was placed around your implant (or bony ridge) to improve the overall bone and soft tissue volume available to support the implant and or subsequent prosthesis.

WHAT IS THE BONE GRAFT?

The bone graft consists of a mixture of osteoid cells and bone chips from your jaw (derived from the surgical site), as well as some de-proteinised bovine bone mineral. This is a purified, sterile and very safe product, which is derived from specially grown Australian cows. The graft material thus resembles small sand granules that have been packed around the implant (or bony ridge) and these have been held in place by draping a small collagen membrane sheet over them. The collagen is also a very safe, animal product, which is delivered from specially grown pigs. Small titanium bone tacks may have been used to secure the membrane. Like Titanium implants, these are completely biocompatible and will normally be left in place to prevent the need for additional surgery to remove them. Leaving them is the safe and simple option.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

During the first few weeks after surgery, you will notice that the grafted area feels much fuller in contour than it previously did. Over the next few months, the collagen will resorb away and your own bone cells will begin to grow through the scaffold of bone mineral particles and begin laying down fresh, new bone of your own. Over time, the bone mineral particles will be completely surrounded by your own bone.

The bone graft will begin to mature in just a few months and sometimes the associated implant may be ready to use in as little as 3 months. In other instances, the degree of grafting may necessitate that the implant remain unrestored for up to 6 months (and very occasionally, even longer). After your surgery, we will know exactly how much grafting was required and hence we will be able to advise you on the likely healing period.

SPECIAL CARE NECESSARY:

It is important during the initial weeks of healing, that you do not disturb the bone graft area. Using the “sand granule” analogy, if you were to place a towel (collagen membrane) on the sand at the beach (your bone graft), and then sit on it, you would leave an imprint in the sand under the towel – by shifting the sand to the sides of the towel. Similarly, if you pressure the area of the graft, you may shift the bone granules away from the area where they are required. Therefore it is important that you do not brush this area for the first two weeks post-surgery (but continue your chlorhexidine rinsing), and then brush gently thereafter. At no time should you put finger pressure or any other pushing force on this site.

COMPLICATIONS:

Exposure of the white collagen membrane often occurs but does not constitute a complication unless it infects or comes out completely. Infections are generally rare provided good oral hygiene (and chlorhexidine rinsing) is maintained, and any antibiotics prescribed are taken in full. Your gum will normally “grow” over this collagen in the ensuing 1-2 weeks. You may also notice the occasional bone granule come out. These appear as small, hard irregular particles, the size of a large grain of sand. Again, if there are only a few, there is nothing to worry about.

If you are at all concerned about the healing associated with your graft, please do not hesitate to contact us on (07) 3379 1555 (work hours) or Dr Mandikos on 0403 327 663, (after hours).