



Bart D. Williams III, M.D., D.M.D., FACS

www.carolinaofs.com

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS for ALVEOLAR CLEFT BONE GRAFT SURGERY

During Your Outpatient Hospital Stay

- You will receive a general anesthetic and be completely asleep for your procedure. It is typical to remain in the recovery room for a couple of hours before being discharged.
- Dr. Williams will see you and family members prior to surgery and immediately following surgery.
- Initial recovery typically takes **two to three weeks**, with full healing over several months. Swelling, mild discomfort, and a temporary change in diet are common. Most patients return to school in approximately one week but no heavy active play or contact sports for 6 weeks. **A patient should have a caregiver for both day and night for the first several days following surgery to assist with daily tasks, nutrition, oral hygiene, and encouragement to get up and move around.**

Prescriptions

- All patient prescriptions are electronically sent to the pharmacy the family provided at the presurgical appointment.
- Your child will be on an **oral antibiotic for 7-10 days**. If your child is having nausea or diarrhea from the antibiotic, please call our office so that we can discuss and make any prescription changes.
- **Pain medications on an empty stomach may cause nausea.** Once home, have your child consume liquid nutrition. Suggestions are broth, soup, pudding, and yogurt to start. A liquid diet will be necessary the first week following surgery, followed by a diet of soft, non-chew foods.
- It is best to eat at least 30 minutes prior to taking medications to minimize nausea.
- **Start with Ibuprofen (Advil[®], Motrin[®]):** Take the doctor recommended dose of Ibuprofen (200mg tablets). If taking the liquid form, follow the instructions on the bottle based off weight.
- **Follow with Acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]):** After 3-4 hours from taking the Ibuprofen, take the recommended dose of Tylenol. The dosage is based off weight, therefore follow the directions on the bottle.
- **Alternate:** Continue alternating between Ibuprofen and Tylenol every 3-4 hours as needed for pain relief so each medication is taken on its own six-hour schedule.
- **Follow Doctor's Instructions:** Always follow the specific instructions provided by Dr. Williams regarding dosage, frequency, and duration of medication. If prescribed a stronger pain medication, take as directed in addition to ibuprofen. If you were given a prescription pain reliever, follow the directions on the bottle.
- Write down the medication taken, time, and dose to keep track of how much medication you have taken and when. **Do not exceed the maximum daily dose** of any medication.

ORAL HYGIENE

- Oral hygiene is challenging, but especially important to manage following surgery. Swish and gently spit tap water, saltwater (1/2 measured teaspoon in 8 oz. of water), or prescribed mouthwash as directed four times daily, especially after eating.

ORAL HYGIENE CONTINUED:

- **DO NOT BRUSH UPPER TEETH** until cleared by Dr. Williams, which is usually after first postoperative visit to our office. Avoid sutures and gently use a soft toothbrush in a downward direction only. **DO NOT use brushstrokes up or side to side as this can pull the gum wound open.** Usually, you will be instructed to brush normally starting one week after surgery, teeth can be gently brushed with a soft toothbrush, making sure to avoid the suture lines.
- Please brush lower teeth and tongue right after surgery and continue as normal.
- Your child may have a plastic splint wired to the teeth. We will discuss this at the preoperative visit as well. **If so, this is typically removed 4 or more weeks after the bone graft.** Oral hygiene is still important as the splint will collect food and in turn this will aggravate the wound. **Remember, Dr. Williams will discuss normal brushing around one week after surgery.**

BMP: BONE MORPHOGENIC PROTEIN GRAFTING

- Dr. Williams will discuss the use of BMP at your child's presurgical appointment. If BMP is used to correct the cleft of the alveolar ridge, it is not unusual for there to be significant swelling of the upper lip and cheek 48-72 hours following surgery. The swelling may remain up to a week after surgery. This is part of the normal healing process.

Hip (Iliac Crest) Grafting

- Dr. Williams will discuss hip, iliac crest, grafting at your child's presurgical appointment. If a hip graft is used to correct the cleft of the alveolar ridge, your child may shower after 48 hours. Prior to that time, the child should sponge bathe only and keep the donor site dressing dry and intact. The outer dressing is usually removed at the first postoperative visit but may be removed after 48 hours if heavily soiled or coming off. Bruising at the donor site is expected and normal. It should resolve in 10-14 days. Your child may be uncomfortable walking for several days after surgery. Parents should encourage the child to get out of bed several times a day. The discomfort should improve significantly within the first week or so of surgery.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- **No drinking through straws, blowing through the mouth, or any other activity that can cause an increase in pressure to the bone graft site in the mouth.** Try not to let your child forcibly rub or pick at their nose. If there is some blood-tinged nasal drainage, gently wipe or pat the area. The incision in the mouth is closed with absorbable sutures that will fall out over a few weeks.
- **DO NOT allow your child to** submerge their head under water until cleared by Dr. Williams, as that event also causes pressure on the graft site.
- **Physical activity as tolerated after two weeks post-surgery. However, no heavy active play or contact sports for 6 weeks.**

IN CASE OF THESE POSTOPERATIVE EVENTS CALL OUR OFFICE 864-458-9800

- Check your temperature daily for at least 5 days... a mild elevation is normal, but a temperature over 101 degrees is NOT normal. In addition, if your child has bleeding from the mouth, a foul-smelling odor or drainage, pain that does not go away after receiving medicine for pain, vomits, or is not drinking liquids, call our office.

YOUR FIRST POST-OPERATIVE VISIT TO THE OFFICE

Your first follow up appointment will include taking postoperative x-rays and assistance with additional cleaning of your teeth and mouth within one week of your surgery date. This appointment will be scheduled at your presurgical appointment. If you have any questions or if any problem occurs, please contact our office 24 hours a day at **864-458-9800**. **If after normal office hours, Dr. Williams will be paged through the Prisma answering service. Please allow time for Dr. Williams to return your call.**

