

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING PERIODONTAL SURGERY **After the First Week**

The following information has been prepared to help answer the many questions you may have regarding daily care of the surgical site in the ensuing days and weeks.

The most important point to remember is that for proper healing to take place, **the surgical area must be kept plaque free**. Complete healing requires a minimum of six weeks, and the cleaner the area is kept, the better the final result. Now that the sutures have been removed, you should expect the area to heal rapidly, feeling better and better every day. In addition, any post-operative sensitivity of the teeth (to hot and cold) that you might encounter will be lessened by meticulous plaque control. Needless to say, smoking is highly detrimental to proper healing and can jeopardize the likelihood for long term success.

The specific type of toothpaste that you use is not so important, although a toothpaste containing fluoride is preferred. What is more important than any toothpaste or mouthwash is the actual mechanical removal of plaque, which is accomplished by a cleaning aid physically rubbing against the tooth surface. The following are the more common ways to accomplish this:

- 1. TOOTHBRUSH:** You should gently begin to brush the teeth involved in the surgical site. Use a soft brush. You can soften your toothbrush even more by holding it under hot water for a few minutes. Use a gentle circular vibrating motion where the tooth meets the gum. Do not be alarmed if the area bleeds a little bit for the first few days. This is expected.
- 2. RUBBER TIP SIMULATOR:** This device is very important for the first few weeks. It serves two purposes: to help contour the gum closer to the underlying bone, and to remove plaque from between the teeth. This should be used (as demonstrated) at least four times per day for at least two weeks.
- 3. PROXABRUSH:** This oral hygiene aid may eventually become your greatest ally in the battle against plaque! The proxabrush is an excellent device to clean between the teeth. The gum tissue that used to fill the spaces between your teeth (and formed the periodontal pockets) has been placed closer to the bone so that you can now effectively clean that area. You should start to gently use the proxabrush (as demonstrated) in about four days (or 11 days after the surgery.) You should use it whenever you brush your teeth, at least twice per day. Once again, do not be alarmed if the area initially bleeds a little.
- 4. FLOSS:** Do **not** use floss for the next two weeks (or for three weeks after the surgery.) We want the gum to heal tightly around the teeth, and vigorous flossing can initially delay that result. After these three weeks following the surgery, you may resume flossing of the surgical site.