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Soft Tissue Grafting

by COQUITLAMPERIO on JUNE 7, 2013

As they age many people experience gum recession. This occurs when the tissue surrounding a tooth pulls away from the tooth exposing the root surface. This can cause damage to the bone and extreme temperature sensitivity. If left untreated, gum recession may lead to tooth loss.

Causes of Gum Recession:

- Trauma
- Gum Disease
- Aggressive Brushing
- Naturally Thin Tissue
- Orthodontic Treatment

A Soft Tissue Graft is a surgical procedure that covers an exposed root with grafted tissue. Besides treating sensitivity, this procedure improves the appearance of the tooth and helps to prevent decay on the exposed root. The donor tissue is sutured into place over the exposed root and a surgical dressing is placed over the site to aid in healing.

Types of Soft Tissue Grafts

Free Gingival Grafts

During a Free Gingival Graft, incisions are made on the palate or roof of the mouth and a flap is created. The donor tissue is removed from underneath the flap. Once the tissue has been removed, the flap is closed with sutures.

Subepithelial Connective Tissue Grafts

During a Subepithelial Connective Tissue Graft, tissue is removed directly from the palate and placed over the exposed root. No flap is needed. This is the most common type of soft tissue graft. The procedure is very predictable and is tolerated well by most patients.

Lateral Pedicle Grafts

During a Lateral Pedicle Graft, the donor tissue comes from the area adjacent to the damaged gum tissue. The donor tissue is cut and rotated over the exposed root of the adjacent tooth. The rotated tissue is held in place with sutures. This type of graft is not commonly performed because there is not always enough healthy gum tissue in the area to transplant. This type of graft may also jeopardize the health of the donor area.

Acellular Dermal Matrix

Acellular Dermal Matrix Treatments utilize donated human skin from tissue banks as grafting material. This type of graft may be used to cover exposed root surfaces, in gingival augmentation or around dental implants.

Aftercare

The Periodontist will give detailed post-op instructions both orally and in writing to prevent complications. It may take one to two weeks for the surgical sites to heal. During this time care must be taken when eating and cleaning the surrounding teeth. Prescription pain medication and antibiotics may be prescribed. Complications are rare. Most patients heal well and may return to normal activities in a short amount of time. However, the Periodontist should be contacted if excessive bleeding or pain beyond normal is experienced.

[Contact a Vancouver periodontist about soft tissue grafts](#)

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