

Bone Grafting

What is bone grafting?

Bone grafting is a surgical procedure that replaces missing bone from the jaw area. A small surgical incision is made in either the iliac crest (hip bone), femoral bone (thigh) or tibial bone (lower leg) depending on which area Dr. Bourget feels is the appropriate surgical area. On occasion your own bone can also be taken from the jaw or a bone substitute (artificial bone) obtained from the tissue bank will be used as a replacement or a substitute to your own bone. This bone is then replaced in the mouth (maxilla and/or mandible) to encourage bone regeneration.

Why a Bone graft?

The most common use of a bone grafting is the application of dental implants. Dental implants require bones underneath them for support and to have the implant integrate properly into the mouth. People who have been without teeth for a prolonged period may not have enough bone left in the necessary locations. Other reasons may include previous extractions, gum disease and/or injury. Replacing the bone loss in your mouth promotes regeneration of bone growth to allow density to occur for further dental treatment such as implants, dentures or corrective surgery.

Consultation

During your initial consultation with Dr. Bourget, he will perform a clinical exam, have x-rays taken of your mouth and in some cases a CT scan to determine the amount of bone loss. As a result of these findings your bone graft donor site will be determined. Common donor sites include iliac crest, femoral, and tibia bones). In some cases, where a smaller amount of bone is required, bone can be obtained from the posterior mandibular region (the area of the wisdom teeth). The type of anesthesia (general anesthesia or IV sedation) as well as the benefits and risks of your surgery will be discussed by Dr. Bourget at time of consultation.

Pre-operative Instructions

Carefully following these instructions prior to surgery will help your surgery go smoothly:

- You should not eat or drink 6 hours prior to surgery (after midnight if having a general anesthetic). No food, gum or candy is permitted. If you have been instructed by Dr. Bourget to take medication a small sip of water is allowed.
- You will receive a call from the facility of choice, confirming your appointment and the time to arrive. You will also be instructed to leave ALL jewelry and valuables at home. Bring your health card and any payment due. Bring all medications with you to your appointment. Only take your medication if instructed by Dr. Bourget.
- Have a responsible adult with you to drive you home and to stay with you for the first 24 hours. The medications given to you during your surgery deems you legally impaired for the next 24 hours.
- Loose clothing is encouraged, especially if your bone graft is from the lower part of your body.

Surgery

A small incision is made to the surgical site to remove your bone as previously discussed with Dr. Bourget. Steristrips and a small dressing is applied to the area. Most often, sutures are below the skin and are not required to be removed. Bone is then replaced in either your upper or lower jaw by making an incision of the gums, and grafted onto your jaw bone. Sutures are used to close the gums and most often are self dissolving.

Post-Operative Instructions

Immediately following your surgery you will likely feel some discomfort after the anesthetic (“freezing”) wears off. Take the recommended or prescribed medications as directed to relieve symptoms. The amount of pain you will have may vary. Keep in mind that the pain medication may not completely eliminate the pain, but should make it manageable. The pain will probably last at least several days and possibly even 1 to 2 weeks depending on the surgical difficulties.

Swelling of your jaw and cheeks is normal after surgery and will generally increase for two to three days before it starts to slowly decrease. It is very helpful to apply cold compresses to the sides of your face for the first 24-48hrs for 20 minute intervals. You can continue using ice for several days if you feel it helps with the discomfort. In a few days you may notice bruising, which may appear blue or yellow, developing in the jaw area and possibly your neck. Both bruising and swelling are extremely variable and unpredictable.

Do not put dentures in until you see Dr Bourget at your appointment on:

_____ at _____

You will be seen by Dr. Bourget in his clinic the morning after your surgery for your post operative check up. Your bandage will be removed at this time. You can shower 24 hours after your surgery.

It is very important that you rest quietly for the next 24hrs and avoid vigorous exercise and heavy lifting including house work for at least 3-5 days post-op. When you lie down keep your head elevated with 2-3 pillows. You may find difficulty in swallowing the first few hours after surgery because of the freezing in your mouth and for the next several days due to the discomfort. Difficulty opening your mouth widely for several days is normal. It is important that you eat and drink. Eat very soft foods (pudding, yogurt, soups, and pastas) and lots of liquids for the first 2 to 3 days and avoid straws. Because of the freezing it may be for at least 1 week after surgery due to the prescription medications you will be taking.

TRY TO AVOID SMOKING COMPLETELY, as it tends to slow the healing process.

Your bone graft is made up of many particles. You may find some small granules in your mouth for the first several days. Do not be alarmed by this. It is normal too have some of them come out of the graft site and into your mouth. There are some things you could do to minimize the amount of particles that become dislodged:

- Do not vigorously rinse or spit for 3-5 days
- Do not apply pressure with your tongue or fingers to the grafted area as the material is moveable during the initial healing. Do not lift or pull on your lip to look at the sutures. This can actually cause damage to the wound site and tear the sutures.
- Gentle rinsing is advised after 24hrs. (Mouth wash will be prescribed.)
- Most often the stitches in your mouth are self dissolving. These should be gone in about 14-21 days post op. Do not pull at sutures as you may pull apart your incision.

Should you experience the following symptoms please contact Dr. Bourget right away:

- Fever/chills
- Drainage from the incision that has odor or color
- Separation of incision
- Uncontrolled bleeding

Contact your nearest emergency room for the following symptoms:

- Unexplained leg pain
- Shortness of breathe
- Pain in your chest

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Faithful compliance with these instructions will add to your comfort and hasten your recovery. Be sure to follow these instructions carefully. Only in this way will you avoid the complications which lead to unnecessary discomfort and delayed recovery.

Atlantic Oral Surgery & Facial Reconstruction Centres
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