



Central Park West Dentistry

Phone: 212-579-8885
Fax: 212-579-8881
office@cpwdentistry.com
www.cpwdentistry.com

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25 West 68th Street, Suite 1A
(located between CPW and Columbus)
25 Central Park West, Suite 1B
(enter on 62nd St between CPW and Broadway)
New York, NY 10023

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PERIODONTAL SURGERY

What causes the gums to need periodontal surgery?

The most common reason for the gums to need surgical treatment is an infection in the gum, when the site of infection has progressed far enough below the gum that it requires surgery to address it. Other reasons include loss of gum and/or bone; in this case, surgical treatment can regrow or reposition lost gum or bone tissues. In some cases, too much gum or bone is present, and surgery would resolve the issue.

What is involved in the procedure?

When performing surgery on the gums, the doctor will make an incision, treat the area by removing any infection that's present, remove or add bone or gum tissue (whatever is necessary), and close the incision with some stitches.

Will I have pain during or after this procedure?

Most patients report that they remain comfortable during periodontal surgery. Please let us know if you experience any discomfort, so your dentist can stop and help you. Keeping you comfortable throughout every phase of treatment is our primary concern, although it is not unusual for gums to be sore or sensitive for a few days after treatment. An appropriate over-the-counter pain medication is usually sufficient to alleviate discomfort. However, if you experience severe pain, swelling, or excessive bleeding, please call the office.

Normal symptoms following periodontal surgery include:

- Swelling, bruising, or discoloration, and/or difficulty opening the mouth. Usually over the counter medication will be adequate, but sometimes prescription painkillers will be needed. Swelling usually reaches its maximum at 48 hours after surgery, and resolves over the next 48 hours.

Symptoms that would indicate a problem, which should be reported to your dentist would be as follows:

- Any significant pain or pain that is not well-managed by medication
- Significant swelling which could be an indication of infection
- Bleeding that is not controlled

Are there any foods I should avoid after this procedure?

You should wait until the numbness wears off before eating. Avoid any foods or beverages that are very hot in terms of spiciness or temperature for the next 3 to 4 days following the procedure, and try to chew all foods on the opposite side of the treated area. Do not smoke for at least 48 hours. Smoking will delay healing and cause pain.

How should I care for my gums after the surgery?

Oral hygiene is extremely important after surgery; it will reduce the risk of infection. It will also promote healing and make you more comfortable. Start using Peridex, the prescription mouth rinse, the morning after your procedure. The Peridex will keep your surgical area clean. Avoid brushing your teeth in areas where you have stitches until they start coming out on their own. This may take a few days or up to 2 weeks. Any remaining sutures will be removed at your follow-up visit. Brush and floss normally in all other areas. Take prescribed medications as directed, and be sure to keep any follow-up appointments. Do not take aspirin.