



Periodontal Surgery

Helping you understand your procedure and the consent form

► ***Please read this handout before reading and signing the consent form.***

This handout explains periodontal or gum surgery, including risks, benefits and alternatives. This handout is in addition to the discussions you have with your doctors. It is important that you understand this information, so please read this handout thoroughly.

About the Procedure

This procedure is done to gently move the gums temporarily aside so the teeth and bone can be cleaned and shaped for better long-term cleaning and oral health. Antibiotics may or may not be given. Local anesthesia is used to numb the area where the procedure is done.

Benefits

You might receive the benefits listed below from this procedure. The general chance of having these results happen is about 90%. Doctors cannot guarantee that you will receive any of these benefits. Only you can decide if the benefits are worth the risks. Benefits may include:

- Prolong the life of compromised teeth.
- Eliminate infection.
- Reduce pockets around the teeth, making them easier to keep clean.
- Reduce overgrown or diseased gum tissue.
- Reduce or eliminate foul odors.
- Remove tartar on teeth.
- Possibly decrease tooth mobility.

What are the possible risks and complications from this procedure?

Before you have this procedure, you need to understand the associated risks. No procedure is completely risk-free. These risks are well-recognized, but there may also be risks not included in this list that are unforeseen by your doctors. Risks may include:

- General risks, which apply to all types of surgery and to procedures where a blood vessel, body cavity, or other internal tissue is entered with a needle, tube, or similar device. Such procedures are called *invasive* procedures. These risks, which can be serious and even life-threatening, include bleeding, infection, and damage to surrounding tissues, vessels, nerves, or organs.

Risks specific to this procedure include:

- Pain.
- Bleeding (oozing is normal).
- Bruising.
- Nerve damage (causing temporary or, rarely, permanent numbness).
- Temporary or long-term *increase* in tooth mobility.
- Treatment may not work and teeth may need to be extracted later.
- Short- or long-term sensitivity of the teeth, particularly to sweets, cold, and heat.
- May change the appearance of your teeth or smile. This usually means longer-looking teeth that might have “black triangles” between them.
- Surgery may need to be done again in the future.
- May not eliminate infection.
- Possible side effects from medicines, including allergic reaction to any antibiotic used, upset stomach/nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fungal infection.
- Possible problems with recovery, including worsening infection and tissues healing in the wrong position, which means more surgery will likely be needed.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?

You may decide not to have this procedure. Besides doing nothing, the alternative treatments are:

- More frequent cleanings.
- Taking antibiotics.
- Extraction of teeth. (To learn more, ask for our handout, *Removal of Teeth*.)
- Using another type of anesthesia/sedation such as oral or nitrous oxide sedation, or IV sedation.

There are risks and benefits to these treatment alternatives. Please discuss the details with your doctor, but these risks include:

- Inability to control the gum disease, meaning earlier loss of teeth.
- Inability to control the infection.

What follow-up care is needed?

It is vital that we check to make sure your mouth heals correctly after surgery. Be sure to:

- Take any antibiotic as prescribed. Use it all up, even if you feel like the infection is gone.

Questions?

Call 206-598-4277

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Dental Clinic:
206-598-4277

- Return to our clinic for all follow-up visits to check your progress, and later as instructed by your doctor to remove the packing and/or sutures that were placed right after surgery.
- Leave your sutures alone. Touch them as little as possible with your tongue, fingers, silverware, etc.

If you have any more questions about this procedure or the risks, benefits, or alternatives to this procedure, ask your doctor before signing any consent forms.

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