



Skin Graft Wound Care for _____

- No strenuous activity or heavy lifting for 48 hours. Resume moderate activity in 48 hours.
- Take Extra Strength Tylenol (500 mg) or Acetaminophen as needed for discomfort, 1-2 tabs every 4-6 hours. Do not take any extra aspirin or anti-inflammatory products (Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, Aleve) for 1 week after surgery unless instructed by doctor.
- No alcoholic beverages for 48 hours.
- Keep the white pressure bandage in place for 24 hours. If the bandage becomes blood tinged or loose, reinforce it with gauze and tape. (Refer to the reverse side of this page for management of bleeding). **Remove the white bandage in 24 hours.**
- Leave the flat tan bandage in place for one week. If the bandage becomes blood tinged or loose, reinforce it with gauze and tape. (Refer to the reverse side of this page for management of bleeding)
- Keep the bandage dry. Wash around it carefully.
- If the tape becomes soiled or starts to come off, reinforce it with additional paper tape or bandaids.
- Do not smoke for 3 weeks; smoking is detrimental to wound healing and may cause the graft to die.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to extremely cold temperatures for 3 weeks.
- It is normal to have swelling and bruising around the surgical site. The bruising will fade in approximately 10-14 days. Elevate the area to reduce swelling.
- Numbness, itchiness and sensitivity to temperature changes can occur after surgery and may take up to 18 months to normalize.

➤ **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: 317-859-8970**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECOND WEEK:

- Remove the tan bandage and non-stick gauze from the graft site (these usually come off together but if not, gently remove the gauze) and the tan bandage and steri-strips from the graft donor site.
- **Gently** clean the graft site and sutured site with mild soap and tap water, using a Q-tip, cotton ball or gauze. Do **NOT** attempt to aggressively remove any scab, as this may disrupt the graft.
- Apply Vaseline or Aquaphor or Bacitracin or Polysporin with a Q-tip (Do **NOT** use Neosporin or Triple Antibiotic ointment) to the graft site and sutured site and cover with a bandaid or nonstick gauze and paper tape.
- Repeat **daily** for one week or until completely healed with no open or draining areas.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

BLEEDING:

1. Leave the bandage in place.
2. Use tightly rolled up gauze or a cloth to apply direct pressure over the bandage for 20 minutes.
3. Reapply pressure for an additional 20 minutes if necessary
4. Call the office or go to the nearest emergency room if pressure fails to stop the bleeding.
5. Use additional gauze and tape to maintain pressure once the bleeding has stopped.

PAIN:

1. Post operative pain should slowly get better, never worse.
2. A severe increase in pain may indicate a problem. Call the office if this occurs.

INFECTION:

1. Watch for fevers, discharge, spreading redness, increased tenderness, usually 4-7 days after the procedure. Call the office if this occurs.

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR SKIN GRAFT

* At 1 week the graft site may look dusky or purple in color. **This is normal.** The graft will slowly turn pink in color over the next 1-2 weeks.

*Massaging the graft donor area will help the scar soften and fade quicker. Begin to massage the area **one month** after the bandages have been removed. Apply pressure directly and firmly over the scar with the fingertips and move in a circular motion. Massage the area for a few minutes several times a day.

*A few weeks after surgery it is not uncommon to see the formation of “tender pimple-like” bump along the sutured area or under the healed graft. This is normal. Do not pick or squeeze, this will resolve on its own. Should one break open producing a small amount of drainage, apply Polysporin or Bacitracin ointment a few times a day until the wound is completely healed.

*Numbness in the surgical area is expected. It might take 12-18 months for the feeling to return to normal. During this time sensations of itchiness, tingling and occasional sharp pains might be noted.

***Protect a fresh scar from the sun.** Use a sun-screen with SPF 30 or greater or barriers as clothing, or a wide-brimmed hat.