

SKIN GRAFTS

Next appointment:

1. For dressing: Date: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____
2. For suture removal: Date: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMMENCING WOUND CARE.

This dressing needs to be kept dry until you return to the centre for a dressing change appointment. Do not remove the dressing yourself.

- It is very important to keep the dressing dry. If the dressing gets wet or needs changing for any reason, please contact us as soon as possible.
- If you have a bandage applied, leave this on for 24 hours, unless otherwise instructed. After this period, the bandage but not the dressing may be removed.

IMPORTANT – Please remember to NEVER leave a wet dressing on a wound. If the initial surface dressing does become wet, it must be changed. Dry dressings minimise the risk of infection.

Pain relief

- Take Panadol or Panadeine for pain relief.
- DO NOT take Aspirin or anti-inflammatories (such as Nurofen or Advil) as they can increase bleeding.

Rest

- Go home and rest.
- If the wound is on your face, do not bend over but rather squat down to reduce the risk of bleeding. It is also important to avoid lifting anything heavy.
- Elevate your head on two to three pillows for 48 hours to reduce swelling and minimise bleeding.
- If the wound is on your arm, keep the area elevated on a pillow for 48 hours.
- If the wound is on your leg, keep the area elevated when sitting down.
- Limitation of activity will be necessary until the graft is healed, which may take three to four weeks.

Bleeding

- Minor bleeding is normal for the first 24-48 hours.
- If bleeding occurs, apply pressure for 20 minutes and keep the area elevated.
- If you experience heavy or prolonged bleeding, please contact us.

Swelling / Bruising

- Minor to moderate swelling or bruising is normal.
- Apply an ice pack for two to three days (at least three times a day) to reduce swelling and bleeding.
- Ice packs wrapped in a cloth should be applied for 10 minutes on, 10 minutes off, 10 minutes on (for 30 minutes).
- If you experience excessive swelling or bruising, please contact us.

Infection

- Please contact us if you experience:
 - Increased pain, temperature and flu-like symptoms;
 - Widespread redness or offensive discharge coming from the wound.
- Avoid make-up, cream and antiseptic solutions until the wound is completely healed. These products may cause wound breakdown.
- Avoid strenuous exercise as this may cause trauma and increase the likelihood of infection.

Exercise

Avoid activities that could cause the wound to pull apart, such as lifting, straining, contact sports, and intense exercise. Avoid swimming if you have stitches in place.

Long-term care

- Your graft will need a few months to settle and should continue to improve over six to 12 months.
- Avoid sun exposure over the first six weeks as this can cause unusual pigmentation of the graft.
- The graft may become raised. This will be improved by firm massage.
- The graft may be numb for a few months. Use a moisturising cream on both the grafted area and the donor sites for three months or longer if the areas remain dry.
- It is best to wear a Tubigrip-type support over lower leg and foot grafts for two to six months.
- Applying tape to the wound and graft and/or applying vitamin E cream to a healed scar or graft can assist in scar reduction.
- Makeup may be used to cover the graft after it is healed, which is generally two weeks.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact us.