



SKIN-GRAFT WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Materials needed:

- Hydrogen peroxide
- Vaseline ointment (**NEW** Tube/Jar, Not to be used for any other purpose)
- Q-tips
- Flexible fabric band-aids or telfa and paper tape (depending on the size of the graft)
- Isopropyl Rubbing Alcohol and cotton balls (you may or may not need this)

Post-op days 1 through 7:

- **Keep the pressure dressing in place an entire week. Do NOT remove the dressing.**
- **Do not get this dressing wet under any circumstances.** You may shower with a shower cap providing the dressing is kept dry.
- Please take it easy for the first two days after surgery. You are at risk for post operative bleeding if you “over do it”.
- **No sports activities of any kind for a full week.** The dressing must stay dry and clean which is not possible if you sweat to any significant degree.
- It is best to avoid strenuous activity such as vigorous exercise, bending, stooping, straining or lifting for the week following surgery. Sometimes these activities can activate bleeding from the surgical site.
- If you were prescribed oral antibiotics please take as recommended.
- If the dressing loosens during this period or comes loose please notify us during business hours.

7 Days post-op:

- You will be returning to the office for our staff to remove your pressure dressing.
- Thank you for your patience and help in taking care not to disturb the graft during the past week. This gave the graft a chance to survive.
- **It is normal for the graft to appear red or purplish and a little crusted at this time.** It takes grafts a little bit longer than other types of repairs to fully heal.

Post-op week 2 through 6:

- The goal in caring for your graft is to keep it clean with hydrogen peroxide and moist with Vaseline ointment. It will heal faster this way. Please try to be very careful with it. **ALWAYS DAB. NEVER RUB.** Twice a day for 5 weeks we would like you to follow the wound care regimen below.
- Gently clean the graft with Q-tips saturated with hydrogen peroxide. Gently roll the Q-tip over the graft. **DO NOT RUB.** Dry the graft by gently rolling another dry Q-tip over the graft. Do not soak the wound with peroxide, please use only enough to remove the crusts. If there is no crusting, then peroxide is not necessary. Scabs are BAD and inhibit proper wound healing. All scabs must be gently loosened and removed.

- Gently apply Vaseline to the graft with a Q-tip by gently rolling over the graft. I prefer that you do not use Neosporin or Bacitracin ointment because many people are allergic to it.
- The wound should then be covered with a Band-Aid, if small enough. For larger grafts, a piece of non-stick pad should be used. Tape can be used to secure the non-stick pad in place.
- **Continue this wound care regimen twice daily until you see your provider back at approximately 6 weeks post-op.** The area can get wet during showers but be careful not to let the full force of the shower hit the area, it is delicate. If the bandage gets wet, change the dressing. **The graft needs to be covered at ALL times 24 hours a day to protect it and keep it from drying out.** The graft is very delicate during its healing process.
- If you are having difficulty getting the regular dressings to adhere you can de-grease the skin where the dressing is to stick with rubbing alcohol applied on a cotton ball. Permit the alcohol to completely evaporate, then apply the dressing.
- You may resume normal activities. Please follow the verbal instructions you were given by your provider and please call the office with any questions.
- You may shower with the telfa/ointment dressing in place after the pressure dressing is removed. Please minimize direct water pressure on the wound area. Low shower water pressure is preferred. Please change this dressing for a new and dry one as detailed above immediately after showering. You may wash your hair with a mild shampoo.
- Do **NOT** submerge the graft in a bathtub, hottub, pool or the ocean until instructed that it is safe to do so. (Plan on for the full 6 weeks)

Common questions during the Post-operative period:

What activities am I permitted to participate in during the post-operative period?

In all cases it is very important to rest for the first two days after surgery. Every wound requires a different period of inactivity during the post-operative period, our office will provide you with specific instructions after your surgery. If you are unclear as to what activities you may safely perform please call the office. Wounds on the trunk and extremities can be torn open by activities such as Tennis and Golf and require a longer period of time before these activities may be resumed. If the wound is torn open it cannot be re-sutured and will take a few months to heal in.

What to do to minimize bleeding:

Do not take NSAID's (ibuprophen, naproxen, aleve, etc) or vitamin E for three days after your surgery. Also, do not take any aspirin for 3 days after surgery (**unless you take this by the recommendation of your primary care physician or cardiologist for a medical indication. In which case you should resume the aspirin therapy right away**). These products can lead to increased bleeding post-operatively. Limit activities as recommended. No heavy lifting for the first few post-operative days. It is common for the incision site to ooze a little blood or fluid especially for the first few days after surgery. **Applying direct pressure to the bleeding area continuously for 20 minutes (no peaking) can usually control this.** If the area continues to bleed after this is done, please call our office (**1-844-SUNDERM**) so we can help.

What to do to minimize discomfort:

The local anesthetics administered during surgery wear off in a few hours. Usually, we do not expect you to have excessive discomfort post-operatively. If you experience discomfort following surgery, take

extra-strength Tylenol. You may take two tablets every 6 hours as needed. If you are still experiencing significant post-operative pain after taking Tylenol please contact our office (**1-844-SUNDERM**).

What are the signs of infection?

It is normal for the wound to drain pink to red fluid for 4 or more days post-operatively. The area will often be somewhat swollen, slightly tender and a little bit red. Signs that your wound might be becoming infected include: any green or yellow drainage from the wound or on the dressing, any smell from the dressing, wounds that are very tender even to a gentle touch, wounds that are very red. If you note any of these signs developing in your surgical site, please call our office immediately (**1-844-SUNDERM**), you may need additional treatment. (note: some of these symptoms may rarely be related to an allergy to bacitracin ointment).

What to do to minimize swelling:

In order to minimize swelling and bruising, which is quite common after surgery, you may want to apply an ice bag, cold soda, or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a small clean towel to the bandaged area a few times a day. Sleeping with your head elevated helps as well. **Please note that bruising and swelling of the eyelids is common with any surgery around the eyes including the forehead/scalp.** (It is possible for this to first occur up to 4 days [or more] after surgery)

What to do if you have ANY questions:

If you have any questions or concerns, please give us a call at **1-844-SUNDERM**. We can be reached 24 hours a day 7 days a week. If for some reason you cannot reach us and you are experiencing an emergency please proceed to the nearest emergency room.