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Diplomate American Board of Plastic Surgery, Diplomate American Board of Surgery

General Surgery, Reconstructive Surgery, Aesthetic Surgery, Plastic and Hand Surgery

Skin Graft

Post-Operative Instructions

Immediately After Surgery

- After getting home, continue to rest for the next 24 hours.
- Take your antibiotic and pain medications as prescribed by Dr. Tran. You may call our office or your pharmacy for any questions regarding your medications.
- Drink plenty of fluids and begin eating soft food, such as Jell-O.
- You may shower 24 hours after your surgery using a gentle soap. You may cover the dressing with a plastic bag to keep it dry and clean.
- Be sure to keep the tie-over bolsters (yellow stuffed dressing) in place until your post-op appointment in 5-7 days.
- Avoid all forms of nicotine, smoking or the use of unauthorized medications as they can lead to complications and jeopardize the results of your surgery.



Fig. 1 – Tie-over bolster is secured in place to stabilize skin graft and prevent hematoma or seroma formation.

One Week After Surgery

Recipient Site (where the skin graft was applied)

1. After the initial dressing is removed by Dr. Tran, you may wash the skin graft gently with soap and water running over the skin graft but not directly hitting the wound.
2. Clean the wound edges with hydrogen peroxide three times a day. Follow by applying a light layer of bacitracin or Neosporin over the skin graft for one week. Cover with gauze.
3. Do not submerge the graft or donor site in the tub or any body of water such as a swimming pool or hot tub to prevent infection.

Donor Site (where the skin graft was taken from): Follow instructions A or B depending on where your skin graft was taken from.

A. Donor Site for Full Thickness Skin Graft (often the incision is at the groin/inguinal area)

1. After Dr. Tran removes the initial dressing at your post-op appointment (one week after surgery), you may notice paper surgical tape (Steri-Strips) on the incision. Leave the Steri-Strips on.



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2. Wash the wound gently with soap and water. You may get it wet in the shower.
3. The Steri-Strips will fall off on their own. If they are still on by the end of the second week after surgery, you may gently peel them off.

B. Donor Site for Split Thickness Skin Graft (generally this wound is from the thigh region)

1. Leave the xeroform gauze (yellow-color bandage) on the thigh intact.
2. If the thigh wound and the xeroform are still moist, dry the wound and the xeroform 3- 4 times a day by placing a hair dryer (on the low setting) or by sitting in front of a fan.
3. It will be fine to apply an ace wrap and dry dressing over the thigh and xeroform to keep it protected from any overlying clothing.
4. As the wound heals, the xeroform gauze will lift from the edges. Trim the edges with a pair of scissors to uncover the newly healed skin. It may take 2 weeks or more before the xeroform lifts off completely.
5. You may apply a gentle moisturizer to the exposed thigh skin once the xeroform has lifted off.
6. If the xeroform gets torn off prematurely, the underlying skin will bleed. Do not worry. Apply some pressure and wash the wound with soap and water. Continue with the wound care as above.

* If the dressings become stuck and are difficult to remove, do not pull on them. You can wet them with warm water and gently lift the gauze off of the wound.

Follow-up Care

Your post-op appointment will be within 5-7 days of your surgery. Our staff will arrange for your visit at your pre-op appointment.

Possible Problems/Emergency

If you develop any symptoms such as fevers with temperature greater than 101.5 F, chills, persistent nausea and vomiting, inability to urinate, persistent numbness/tingling of fingers, any increasing pain not controlled with medications, and if the splint feels tight and is squeezing your wrist/forearm, please contact our office at 714-839-8000 between the hours of 9AM-6PM on Monday-Thursday and 9AM-1PM on Friday; or you may reach us at 714-860-3588 after hour.

If you are unable to reach your surgeon or a member of his staff, go to the Emergency Room closest to you.

References:

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