

Ada West DERMATOLOGY

Diseases of the Skin, Hair, Nails, and Skin Cancer Treatment

Mohs Surgery

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MOHS SURGERY WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SKIN GRAFTS

You have two areas with bandages: your surgical wound that has been repaired with a skin graft and the donor site (where your skin graft was taken from).

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- ◆ Take it easy! Do not do anything that raises your blood pressure or heart rate for at least 48 hours. No exercising, heavy lifting, bending over, stretching, or straining.
- ◆ Do not drink alcohol for 48 hours.
- ◆ Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen for 48 hours (unless aspirin has been prescribed by your physician for heart problems, stroke, blood clots).
- ◆ Do not be surprised if you see a small amount of blood-tinged drainage. If your dressing becomes saturated with bright, red blood, remove the dressing. Then use a clean gauze to apply gentle, but firm direct pressure to the wound for 10 minutes (no peeking). If the bleeding has not stopped, apply pressure for another 10 minutes. **If the bleeding has not stopped after 20 minutes, or if there is a large, swollen, purple area around the surgery site, call our office at (208) 955-0962 or the Emergency Contact Information below.** If the bleeding stops, please call us to discuss further instructions.
- ◆ Bruising and swelling around the surgical site is normal. If your surgery was near the eye, forehead, nose, or cheeks you may experience a black eye. Your eye may even swell shut. Do not be frightened if this happens. The swelling will go down once you are up and around.
- ◆ If your surgical site is on the head, sleep with your head elevated about 30 degrees (a couple of pillows) for the first couple nights to decrease swelling.

If you
bleed

Pain
Control

- ◆ Take Extra Strength Tylenol® (acetaminophen 500 mg), every 4 to 6 hours for pain. You should take 2 tablets each time, but do NOT take more than 8 pills in a 24-hour period. This is typically enough to manage post-operative discomfort, but depending on location or size, Dr. Funke may prescribe a mild narcotic. If this narcotic also contains acetaminophen do NOT take additional acetaminophen until you complete taking the narcotic.

Ice the
area

- ◆ For the first 48 hours you may apply an ice bag to the surgical site every few hours while you are awake. Apply the ice bag about 20 minutes at a time **over the top of your dressing**. A bag of frozen vegetables (peas or corn) works very well also. Wrap a clean washcloth around the bag and hit the bag on the counter so that the contents become "pebbly". Do not apply ice directly to the skin.
- ◆ If prescribed an antibiotic please take as directed and complete the full course.

CARE FOR YOUR SKIN GRAFT:

- ◆ LEAVE THE DRESSING ON AND KEEP IT CLEAN AND DRY UNTIL YOU RETURN FOR A WOUND CHECK AND DRESSING CHANGE (2-7 DAYS).
- ◆ After 24 hours you may shower, but do not get the dressing wet. If this bandage becomes loose or uncomfortable, please call to discuss with the nurse. We can arrange to change your dressing, if needed.
- ◆ If the dressing falls off, do not try to clean the skin graft. Gently apply a generous amount of Vaseline® or Aquaphor® to the graft with a Q-tip®. Then apply a non-stick dressing (Telfa®) that is large enough to cover the graft, and tape it down snugly. (You may need to gently clean the skin around the graft with mild soap and water and then gently pat dry so that the tape will stick). Call our office for additional instructions.
- ◆ Do not let another health care professional change the graft dressing or clean the graft area unless this has been approved with Dr. Funke or a member of our staff.
- ◆ The sutures used on the graft are absorbable and will dissolve over the next 7-10 days.
- ◆ After we remove your bandage you will begin dressing changes. This will be demonstrated on your first dressing change in our office. You will use a Q-tip® to gently clean the graft and surrounding skin with plain water and mild soap such as Dove® liquid, baby shampoo, or Cetaphil® cleanser. Then apply Vaseline® or Aquaphor® ointment and cover with a non-stick bandage and paper tape. You will want to protect the graft with a thin bandage for about one month.
- ◆ For the next 12 months be very diligent about using sunscreen to protect the graft from the sun.

CARE FOR YOUR DONOR SITE:

The skin graft was taken from _____. This is the donor site.

- ◆ Always wash your hands prior to changing the dressing.
- ◆ After 24-48 hours you may carefully remove the dressing and can get the wound wet in the shower. Do NOT soak your wound and do NOT allow direct water pressure to hit the wound. It is ok for soap lather and water to run over the wound, but do NOT lather the wound directly. Gently pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- ◆ After 24-48 hours begin twice-a-day cleaning and dressing of the wound (morning and evening; bathing can count as one time). Use plain water and mild soap such as Dove® liquid, baby shampoo, or Cetaphil® cleanser to gently wash the area. You should use a cotton tip applicator (Q-tip®) or clean gauze to clean the wound. Gently remove any dried blood or excess crust by rolling the cotton tip applicator or gauze over the wound and then rinsing. **Do not use cotton balls.**
- ◆ After cleaning, apply a thin coat of Vaseline® or Aquaphor®. Then apply a new thin bandage (Band-Aid® or non-stick gauze and paper tape).
- ◆ If a scab forms allow it to fall off on its own. Keep dressing the wound and keep it moist with Vaseline® or Aquaphor®. Do NOT pick the scab off.

If donor site was closed with stitches:

- ◆ The stitches will be removed in 7-10 days; keep dressing the wound until that time.

If donor site is left to heal by second intention (mother nature):

- ◆ Keep dressing the wound until it heals (usually 3-6 weeks).

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- ◆ The skin graft may look purple or black when the bandage is first removed. The top layer of skin may peel away from the graft and/or surrounding skin. This is normal and the discoloration will improve over the next several months.
- ◆ The healing rate varies by individual, depending on age, skin type, and location of the graft. Sometimes the color and texture match will be very good within a few weeks, but in most cases there will be redness and slight contour abnormalities for several months. If the cosmetic results of the repair are not satisfactory after about 6 months, there are usually simple procedures that can be performed to improve the appearance.

FOLLOW-UP CARE:

1. Return in _____ days for dressing change/wound check.
2. Return in _____ months for scar check.
3. Return to your general dermatologist for all other skin problems, including a skin exam in 6 months and every 6 months after that for 2 years.

CALL THE DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE:

- ◆ Bright red bleeding from your wound that does not stop after applying gentle, direct pressure for 20 minutes.
 - ◆ A large, swollen, tender, purple area around either surgery site (hematoma).
 - ◆ Redness or swelling that lasts more than 4 days.
 - ◆ Tenderness, warmth, or red streaks around the wound.
 - ◆ Increased bloody drainage, green or yellow drainage, or a foul smelling drainage from your wound.
 - ◆ A fever greater than 101 degrees F that continues after 3 days.
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- ◆ **If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at (208) 955-0962.**
 - ◆ For after-hours emergency, call Dr. Funke's cell phone (208) 890-5047
 - ◆ If you are unable to reach Dr. Funke please go to your local hospital emergency department.