



## **WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SKIN GRAFTS**

You have had a skin graft removed from a “donor site” and sutured to repair your wound. It is crucial that you don’t bump or manipulate your skin graft or it won’t survive. A “bolster dressing” has been sutured over the graft to secure it and protect it.

### **HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF THE GRAFT?**

1. Keep the surgical dressing clean, dry, and intact until you come back in one week for removal. You may shower, but try not to soak the dressing.
2. If the dressing falls off, you will see the bolster secured with stitches. Do not attempt to remove the bolster. Apply Vaseline around the bolster and cover it with a band-aid or dressing.
3. The day you come in to have the bolster dressing removed, please soak the area with warm water before your appointment. You may get in the shower and soak it if you prefer.

### **HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF THE DONOR SITE?**

*If the donor site was closed with stitches:*

1. Remove the pressure dressing 48 hours after surgery.
2. Clean off any dried blood with warm water. A mild soap may be used.
3. Apply Vaseline along the stitches, and apply a band-aid or non-stick dressing.
4. After 3 or 4 days, you may leave the stitches open to the air if preferred.

*If the donor site is being allowed to heal in by Mother Nature:*

1. Leave the original dressing in place for at least 24 hours.
2. Gently clean the wound with warm water. You may use a mild soap or soapless cleanser such as Cetaphil.
3. After cleaning, apply a generous amount of Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment over the wound.
4. Cover the donor site with a band-aid or dressing.
5. Repeat daily until the wound heals (usually 3-6 weeks).

### **WHAT IF I HAVE BLEEDING?**

The greatest risk of bleeding occurs in the first two days after surgery. Try to take it easy and avoid exercise, heavy lifting, bending over, or other activities that increase your heart rate and blood flow to the surgical site.

Some mild bleeding is normal. If the surgical site bleeds enough to saturate the surgical dressing, apply direct pressure right over the dressing for 15 minutes without releasing. If the bleeding continues despite direct pressure, please call our office at **(719) 574-0310**.

### **WHAT IF I HAVE PAIN?**

Take two Extra-strength Tylenol (two 500mg Acetaminophen) every four hours as needed for pain. You may substitute a prescription pain pill if one was prescribed for you.