



GRAFT WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL CARE

- Apply ice over the surgical site 10 minutes for every hour on the first day
- Avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, alcohol and smoking for the next 5 days if possible
- Reduce strenuous activity and heavy lifting for the next week
- Do not get the bandage wet until your follow up

GRAFTED SITE

- This bandage will be removed only by the doctor or nurse at your follow up appointment.
- Keep bandage dry
- After bandage is removed use Vaseline on the graft multiple times daily for the first month

WHAT TO EXPECT – Graft Site

- When the bandage is removed in one week, the graft will appear dark pink/purple and crusty around the edges. It will appear to be flat or concave at first. The skin edges will also be pink but will lighten each day.
- By the second week the graft should become lighter pink.
- It may take up to 2-3 months for the site to appear more flesh-colored, smooth and blended.
- During the first 4 months the graft may appear to be “puffy” and more convex in shape but this will flatten out over time.
- You may experience numbness that is usually temporary.

WHAT TO EXPECT – Donor Site

- Remove the bandage in 24 hours.
- Clean the area with soap and water daily in the shower. Pat the area dry and apply Vaseline to the area. Vaseline ointment should be applied to the sutures/staples multiple times daily. After 24 hours a bandage is optional.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

Bruising

- Bruising can range from none to dark purple areas. Applying pressure to the wound helps prevent bruising, which is why we use a larger pressure dressing for the first 24 hours after surgery. Although they can be unsightly, bruises will fade but sometimes take up to 2 weeks.

Pain

- You may experience some mild discomfort or pain from the swelling that normally occurs during the first several days
 - For discomfort and pain, we encourage you to take extra-strength Tylenol every 4 hours as needed (if you are able to take this medication). Do not exceed 3 grams in one 24 hour period; or prescription as directed.
- Please avoid aspirin or ibuprofen within the first 48 hours as this can increase your risk of bleeding and bruising.
- Ice packs (or a bag of frozen vegetables) wrapped in a dishtowel can help alleviate throbbing pain.
- It is rare the medication stronger than Tylenol are needed - - if you experience pain that is not improved with Tylenol, please contact the clinic.

Bleeding

- If bleeding occurs, apply firm pressure directly over the wound for 15 minutes (no peeking).
 - Time yourself with a clock as this can feel like a long time.
 - If it is still bleeding, please contact the clinic.
- Very rarely, bleeding can occur under the skin.
 - This looks like a purple, egg shaped swelling underneath the wound and is associated with severe pain.
 - Please contact the clinic if you think you have bleeding under the skin or go to your nearby urgent care or emergency room.

Numbness/Tight Feeling

- You may experience numbness around the wound, this is usually temporary
- The skin near the surgery site may feel tight as the skin was stretched during surgery. This will relax with time and may take several months

Infection

- Expect the area to become more red and tender during the first few days after the procedure.
 - This will gradually improve and is part of the normal wound healing process.
- Infection is a rare complication.
 - If it occurs, it begins several days after the procedure.
 - The area will become increasingly red, swollen and tender instead of slowly improving.
 - Please contact the clinic if you think you may have an infection.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE COMING MONTHS

- It takes up to a full year for a scar to be fully formed and strong
- Stitches placed below the skin will be absorbed by the body within 2-3 months
- Sometimes a stitch works its way up through the skin before the body is able to dissolve it, this is also normal but don't hesitate to call our office if you have questions.
- Starting 1 month after surgery, massage the scar a few minutes per day to soften the scar

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE CLINIC AT 808-585-8008.