

SKIN GRAFTING WOUND ADVICE

PRACTICE NURSE INFORMATION

This patient has had a full thickness skin graft performed under local anaesthesia. This involves two wounds: one for the donor skin site and another for the grafted skin.

The sutures around the graft need to be removed after 7 days and this will generally be done at the hospital. The donor site has stitches that need to be removed after 10-14 days. Please contact the clinic if there are any unexpected problems. Please remove the stitches as follows:

PATIENT INFORMATION

Please make an appointment to have your stitches removed on the above date.

GENERAL WOUND ADVICE

▪ SKIN GRAFT SITE

Keep your dressings in place until you are reviewed. You may experience mild oozing from the wound and occasionally the plastic dressing overlying the wound may irritate. Apply Vaseline to the surrounding skin if it itches and wash any surrounding skin gently with warm water, using a cotton ear bud to clean more delicate areas. After stitch removal, wash the wound daily, and use Vaseline four times daily to keep the skin moist.

▪ EXERCISE

You have had a large operation and should rest after your operation for 48 hours. Avoid activities like shopping, cycling, and dog walking during this time.

▪ PAIN

Take Paracetamol regularly if your wound is painful. If this fails to ease the pain, try taking some Brufen (Ibuprofen). Avoid Aspirin as this can increase the risk of bleeding.

▪ BLEEDING

It is normal to expect some oozing of blood from the wound. Apply constant pressure if bleeding develops, for at least 15 minutes, and repeat this if necessary. It should eventually stop. It is also extremely important that you rest completely to keep your blood pressure down.

▪ INFECTION

Infection can complicate any operation and usually appears 2-7 days after the procedure. You may notice increasing pain, redness and swelling. Occasionally, pus may discharge from the wound edge. If infection occurs, see your GP for a prescription for some antibiotics or contact the hospital for advice.

AFTER SUTURE REMOVAL

Immediate Appearance

When the stitches and outer dressings are removed, the graft will be a dusky pink colour and this will improve as blood vessels grow into the skin from underneath. In the first few weeks the skin may become raised with the healing process and this will generally settle down on its own. Women may choose to wear make-up once the wound has become dry.

Late Appearance

The cosmetic appearance of the graft will continue to improve for up to 18 months. The healing process may be helped by massaging a moisturiser such as E45/Vaseline into the graft once daily for 3-4 months.