

## Care of Skin Grafts

### **Bandage:**

1. Leave the bandage in place until you come in for your follow-up appointment in 1 week. **Do not remove the bandage.**
2. Keep the bandage dry and intact until your follow-up appointment. Wash around it carefully.
3. If your bandage begins to fall off before your follow-up appointment, apply ointment around the edges of your bolster daily until you return to office. Use Aquaphor, Vaseline, or Polysporin. **Do NOT use Neosporin.** Do your best to keep the bandage in place. You may secure it with paper tape if you are comfortable doing so. **Do NOT remove your bandage.**

On the day of your follow up appointment:

- Shower 1 hour before your appointment and get the bandage thoroughly soaked. Do not remove the dressing before coming in.
- We will re-bandage the site during your follow up visit. The new bandage should stay in place and dry for a full week.

### **Restrictions:**

- **Until your follow-up appointment:**
  - **Do not use ice on the area where the graft was placed.** Ice may restrict blood flow which may cause the graft to die.
  - No heavy exercise, bending over, or lifting objects over 15 pounds.
- **For 24 hours:**
  - No strenuous activity, including exercise or activities which will raise your heart rate.
  - Do not take blood thinning medications for 24–48 hours post-operatively unless instructed by your doctor. Do not resume until you have gone 24 full hours without bleeding. These medications include: Aspirin, NSAIDs such as ibuprofen (Advil and Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve), and prescription blood thinners such as Eliquis, Xarelto, and Plavix.
- **For 48 hours:**
  - Do not drink alcoholic beverages.
- **For 3 weeks:**
  - Do not smoke. Smoking is detrimental to wound healing and may cause the graft to die.
  - Avoid prolonged exposure to extremely cold temperatures.

### **Expectations:**

- Swelling, redness, yellowish discharge, pain and/or tenderness are all normal and will decrease over the next few days.
- Elevate the area to reduce swelling. Swelling is generally most significant the morning after surgery and will improve with time.

**Bleeding:**

- Your bandage may become blood tinged or loose, reinforce it with gauze and tape. Leave the bandage in place. **Do NOT remove the bandage even if there is bleeding.**
- Apply firm uninterrupted pressure with tightly rolled up gauze for 20 minutes. If bleeding continues, apply pressure for another 20 minutes.
- Call our office or go to the nearest emergency room if bleeding continues after **two rounds** of application of pressure.

**Pain:**

- Take 2 extra strength acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 4-6 hours as needed for pain unless your primary care provider has instructed you not to use acetaminophen.
- Post-operative pain should slowly get better, never worse.

**Signs of Infection:**

Call our office during business hours (Mon-Fri 8:00am - 5:00 pm) and ask for a medical assistant or after business hours and ask for the doctor on call if any of the following signs are present.

- If swelling, redness, and/or tenderness persist for more than a few days, or if they increase or begin again after improving.
- Fever and/or chills.
- If the site is hot to touch.

**For any questions or concerns, call our office at (805) 770-3999.**

**Patient Specific Instructions:**