



Caring for myself after Split Thickness Skin Graft

What are my general instructions?

1. You received a prescription for pain medications. Follow the instructions carefully. After a few days, you may find Extra Strength Tylenol is sufficient. Avoid aspirin or ibuprofen.
2. Eat a balanced diet and try to maintain good nutrition. Also, drink plenty of fluids. Some of the pain medications can cause constipation, and drinking plenty of water will help prevent this.
3. If you do get constipated, you may need a stool softener or a laxative. We or your pharmacist can help you with this.
4. Do not drive for at least one week after the surgery. Your reflexes are slower than you think, and any pain from the incision is distracting. Also, you can't drive while taking prescription opioid (narcotic) pain medications because they slow down your response time. When we see you in the office, we will let you know when we think you may begin driving again.
5. Do not shower until we see you back in the office. You may sponge bathe, but do not get the site of the skin graft wet.

How will I care for the site of the resection and skin graft?

1. There is a large, bulky dressing at the site of the skin graft. This needs to stay in place and should not be disturbed. We will want to remove this dressing in 5 to 7 days.
2. Fluid may drain through the dressing. This is normal, and you may change the outermost dressings if needed.

3. It is **very important** that you keep the site of the skin graft still so that it heals properly. Avoid bumping or injuring that site. We may put a splint on to help remind you not to move that extremity.
4. If the graft is on the leg, you will need crutches and can not bear any weight on that leg. Plan on being on bed rest for the first several days after the surgery. When in bed or a chair, keep that leg elevated on several pillows.
5. When we remove the dressing in the office, we will teach you how to change the dressings and keep the site clean.
6. Call if you see any signs of infection including:
 - increase in the swelling or redness near the area of the surgery
 - the skin around the incision becomes hot to the touch.
 - green or yellow drainage from the wound which may be pus
 - bad smell around the wound
 - fever over 101°F
 - increasing pain

If you have any of these signs, call to make an appointment to be seen at our office. The contact information is on page 3.

How will I care for the donor site?

The donor site is the place where the surgeon took the skin to cover your wound. Usually, it is the upper part of your thigh (but not always). When you leave the hospital, it will be covered with a large white gauze dressing. This dressing applies a small amount of pressure to the wound to help stop residual bleeding. This bulky dressing stays on until the morning after surgery.

Under the gauze is a clear plastic dressing (Tegaderm). Leave this on until we see you back in the clinic. There may be some fluid collecting under the Tegaderm. If this begins leaking, please contact the clinic for further instructions.

What is my follow-up care?

We will see you back in the office in approximately 5 to 7 days after the surgery to remove the dressings and examine the site of the skin graft. Your surgeon will contact you within one week with your pathology report. Depending on that report, you may need additional surgery, a referral to another physician (such as a medical oncologist), or routine follow-up. We will make these arrangements when we know the final pathology.

Remember that healing from surgery, even if that surgery seems small, takes time. If you have any questions about your procedure, your follow-up instructions or plan of care, do not hesitate to call us

What is the contact information for Surgical Oncology?

- During business hours Monday-Friday 9-4:30 pm call the Surgical Oncology clinic at (734) 936-6000.
- For urgent calls after 4:30 pm, weekends and holidays, ask the operator to page the surgical oncology on-call resident at **(734) 936-6267**.

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Surgical Oncology
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