

Greater Washington Dermatology
2401 Research Boulevard, #260, Rockville, MD 20850, 301-990-6565
DR. KELLEY PAGLIAI REDBORD

Post-Op Instructions for Skin Grafts

Patient Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Skin graft location: _____

- Your skin graft is extremely fragile. It is very important that the graft not be disturbed (jostled, bumped, moved, or forceful nose blowing) for three weeks. During the first three or four weeks, the graft is developing its own blood supply. The new blood vessels are tiny and very fragile. If the graft is injured from friction, strenuous exercise or activity, or from changes in the bloodstream caused by smoking, it may not survive.
- Do not use an icepack on the skin graft since it is very fragile. You may use one on the donor site.
- The bandage placed on the skin graft at the time of surgery should be kept dry and intact for 1 week. Do not change the bandage during this time.** After one week, you will return for a dressing change and post-op check of the skin graft.
- During the first week, you may bathe instead of showering so that the bandage remains dry.

Skin graft wound care (after one week):

- After you have had your one week post-op check and dressing change of the skin graft, you will begin changing the dressing at home once per day. First wash your hands with soap and water. Then remove the bandage and gently clean the graft with gauze or Q-tips that have been moistened with soap and water. Use gentle blotting motions and avoid rubbing or friction on the graft. Do not use hydrogen peroxide on the graft for the first two weeks after the surgery. Blot the wound dry with clean gauze or Q-tips.
- Once clean, apply a generous amount of petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) or Aquaphor® healing ointment to a Band-aid or non-stick dressing then place it gently on the graft. Add a square of gauze if there is drainage or oozing. Gently secure the dressing with tape. Do not let the wound dry out and “scab over.” It must stay moist with ointment and a dressing.
- Do not allow adhesive from the tape to come into contact with the graft. This may pull the graft off.
- It is not unusual to be able to see crusting underneath your bandage. Do not be alarmed if the graft becomes dark, crusty, purplish, or pink in color.
- You may start to use hydrogen peroxide to help clean the graft after the graft has been on for at least two weeks. Use hydrogen peroxide ONLY if there is adherent crusting that is difficult to remove with soap and water. Otherwise continue to just use soap and water.
- You will continue wound care once daily keeping the skin graft covered until the wound is completely healed over. This can sometimes take up to 4-5 weeks.
- During this time, you may shower normally as long as the skin graft site is kept dry, covered and away from direct water pressure.