

Skin Graft Post-Operative Discharge Instructions

Diet:

Resume your regular diet. Start slow and bland (crackers, toast), then work up to normal foods.

A higher protein intake is recommended to help your body heal. Consider adding protein bars, powder, or shakes to your daily intake.

It is important to drink plenty of fluids so that you do not become dehydrated.

Wound Care:

Skin Graft Site:

It is very important to leave dressings in place over the graft site until follow-up. These “bolsters” help the new skin heal to the wound bed and grow a new blood supply. If there is fluid build-up or motion at the graft site, the skin graft will fail.

Keep the skin graft site and dressings clean and dry. Do NOT allow water to run over the graft site until cleared at follow-up. Sponge bathe around the area or cover with water-proof dressing that is sealed well prior to showering.

Skin graft donor site care:

Dr. Geiger patients with thigh skin harvest:

Every day undo ACE wraps.

Replace absorbent pads (ABD, maxi-pad, or small diaper) over the clear Tegaderm dressing.

Re-wrap with ACE wrap from distal (lower thigh) to proximal (near groin).

Tape ACE wrap to upper thigh to keep from falling down if needed.

There are white Drawtex pads under the clear Tegaderm dressing. These drawtex pads transfer any fluid egress from leg to the overlying absorbent pads through holes in the Tegaderm. It is normal for the Drawtex to change color and for an odor to develop.

Your thigh will normally heal in 2-3 weeks. The pain in this area will start to improve 4-7 days after your surgery.

Dr. Hulsen patients with thigh skin harvest:

Leave the yellow xeroform gauze in place over your thigh

Cover as needed with absorbent pad. Change as needed.

If a “full thickness graft” was used, the donor site (abdomen, neck, collar bone area or other) will be closed with sutures and either skin glue or tapes. Leave this in place until it falls off on its own or removed by your surgeon at follow-up. Okay to tape some padding or dressings over these areas as needed.

Do NOT smoke or use tobacco products. It WILL impair your healing and increase your complications.

Activity:

No strenuous activity or straining until cleared by your surgeon at follow-up.

If a splint was placed at the time of your surgery, leave it on at all times. It is there to prevent motion at your graft site and prevent shearing or loss of your skin graft.

Elevate any affected extremities above your heart as much as possible.

Avoid activities that may risk injury to your surgical site.

No driving while taking narcotic pain medications.

Medications: See Patient Visit Summary for list of medications. Do not take pain medications on an empty stomach as this may increase nausea. Take all of your antibiotics (if prescribed). Avoid Aspirin and NSAIDs (motrin, advil, ibuprofen, aleve) for the first week after surgery, then okay to start taking.

Pain medication: You may be prescribed Percocet or Norco for postoperative pain unless allergic or intolerant.

Antibiotic: You may or may not be prescribed an antibiotic depending on the wound

If you are taking narcotic pain medications you may experience some constipation. Drink plenty of water and eat plenty of fiber in your diet. Consider a fiber supplement such as Metamucil®, FiberCon®, or Citrucel®. It is okay to take over the counter stool softeners once or twice daily such as Docusate or Colace® found at your local drug store. It is also okay and recommended to take MiraLAX® to help relieve postop constipation for the first 1-2 weeks until you feel regular again. Milk of Magnesia and Magnesium Citrate are additional over the counter items that can help with temporary constipation.

Follow up: Your surgeon in 7-10 days. Call office for specific appointment date and time if you do not already have one.

Office contact number: 314-501-9100

Other Instructions:

Should you experience any of these symptoms call the office:

- Fever of 102 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Persistent pain, nausea, or vomiting.
- Persistent bleeding.
- Shortness of breath.
- Significant redness or drainage from your incision.
- Significant leg swelling or calf pain
- Any other questions or concerns.

During business hours (9am – 4:30pm) call:

Chesterfield Plastic Surgery Office: 314-501-9100

On nights or weekends call:

Hospital exchange: 866-830-0636

General Postsurgical Instructions

You may expect to feel dizzy, weak, and drowsy for as long as 24 hours after receiving the medicine that made you sleep (*anesthetic*). The following information pertains to your recovery period for the first 24 hours following surgery.

Do not drive a car, ride a bicycle, participate in physical activities, or take public transportation until you are done taking narcotic pain medicines or as directed by your caregiver.

Do not drink alcohol or take tranquilizers.

Do not take medicine that has not been prescribed by your caregiver.

Do not sign important papers or make important decisions while on narcotic pain medicines. Have a responsible person with you.