

Advice about donor sites after a skin graft

Plastic Surgery Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This booklet is for people who have had a skin graft. It aims to answer queries that you may have about care of the donor site after your graft.

We wish you a full and speedy recovery from your procedure and hope you find the following advice helpful.

What is a skin graft?

It is the removal of healthy skin from one part of the body to be used on another part of the body, for example if a skin lesion is removed or if it is damaged through a trauma.

What is a donor site?

It is the place on your body where the healthy skin is taken for the skin graft.

How long will it take for the donor site to heal?

It will depend on where the site is on your body but usually it will heal in about 10 to 14 days.

A dressing will be put onto the donor site at the time you have your operation. The dressing protects the area where the skin has been removed and allows it to heal.

This dressing should not be taken off until you see the nurse or doctor at your follow up appointment.

It is important that you keep this dressing dry at all times.

Does the dressing need to be changed?

Occasionally the dressing may need to be changed. If so, you will be given an outpatient appointment for this. Do not take the dressing off yourself.

Please note:

It is normal for the dressing to smell strange as it helps to soak up any fluid that naturally comes out of the wound.

However, contact the plastic surgery specialist nurses on 01384 456111 ext. 4547, if any of the following happen:

- The dressing begins to look greenish in colour
- There is any bleeding or wetness on the dressing
- The skin around the wound becomes red and this starts spreading
- You have a burning sensation (feeling) on or around the wound
- You have increasing pain

Can I have baths and showers?

You will be given instructions about this before you leave hospital. When you are told by the doctor or nurse that the dressing is ready to come off, you can do this by having a bath and soaking the dressing off.

What will the scar look like?

When it first heals, the donor site will be quite red or purple. This will normally fade with time to leave a less noticeable scar.

How do I have to care for the donor site?

Once the area has completely healed, you can wash as normal but pat the area dry very gently.

The new skin does not have the normal amount of glands to moisturise it so it may be more likely to become dry and cracked. Therefore, it is a good idea to moisturise the area regularly, particularly if it becomes dry. The nursing staff will advise you as to which type of moisturiser is recommended.

Always protect the healed area from direct sunlight using clothes or a sunblock as the area is very sensitive to the sun and will burn easily.

What happens now?

You will be sent an outpatient follow up appointment through the post. However, if you need to have your dressing changed, the ward clerk will ring you to give you the date and time for this.

If you cannot keep your outpatient appointments, please contact us as soon as possible to make another appointment. Please contact:

**Outpatient Booking Team 01384 365100
(8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)**

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Plastic surgery specialist nurses on 01384 456111 ext. 4547
(9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/plastic-surgery/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet,
please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ، ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔