

SKIN GRAFT DRESSING INSTRUCTIONS

1. At the completion of your procedure, Dr. Lee sutured on a yellow “bolster dressing” over your skin graft. This consists of Vaseline- and iodine-impregnated gauze that will help protect your graft over the next week. On top of this bolster dressing is a loose bandage that should remain in place for the next 24 hours. It is permissible to shower during this period as long as the bandage does not get wet.

For your donor site wound care instructions, please refer to either the *Vaseline Dressing Instructions* if non-absorbable surface sutures were used (bright blue) or the *Maintenance-Free Dressing Instructions* if absorbable sutures were used (clear).

2. After 24 hours, remove the bandage overlying the bolster dressing. Do not try to remove the yellow bolster dressing that has been sewn onto your skin. Dr. Lee will remove it in one week in the office. Do not be surprised if there is dried blood on the overlying bandage or the bolster dressing – **this is normal and expected**. There should not be active oozing of blood from the wound. If there is, see the instructions for “Bleeding” below.

3. Use a cotton tipped applicator (i.e. Q-tip) soaked in hydrogen peroxide to very gently clean around the bolster dressing. Do not rub any exposed stitches as this may disrupt wound healing. **NOTE: Never place a used cotton tip applicator stick back into the bottle of hydrogen peroxide as it will contaminate it.**

4. Next, apply a large, thick layer of Vaseline 360 degrees around the edges of the bolster dressing. Use a generous amount of Vaseline - similar to frosting a cake.

5. Cover the bolster dressing with a loose bandage. Make sure that no adhesive sticks directly to the bolster dressing as it may pull and harm it during bandage changes.

6. The overlying bandage can be changed once a day and this should be continued for one week. With each bandage change, repeat steps 3 through 5. After the first 24 hours following your surgery, it is permissible to shower. Since the bolster dressing will absorb moisture, try your best to keep this area relatively dry during showers.

***** The most important aspect of wound healing is to make absolutely sure that the area is moist with Vaseline at all times. Keeping the wound covered also helps maintain the moisture provided by the Vaseline.** Wounds that dry out heal much more slowly.

Pain: Extra strength Tylenol 500 mg (acetaminophen) can be taken for pain if needed. Follow the directions on the bottle for dosing. **DO NOT** take any medications with aspirin, aspirin products, ibuprofen (i.e. Motrin, Advil) arthritis medications or related medications without first talking to our office as these medications can thin your blood and increase your risk for bleeding.

Bleeding: True bleeding is rare and should be differentiated from dried blood on the bandage. Dried blood on the dressing is normal and not a cause for concern. Bleeding is defined by active oozing from the wound. If it occurs, apply firm pressure to the site of oozing for **20 minutes**, timed by looking at a clock. You are not to discontinue pressure to see if the bleeding has stopped until 20 minutes have elapsed. If the bleeding continues, remove the pad and press directly with a clean gauze pad or tissue over the bleeding site for another 20 minutes and reassess. If bleeding continues, call our office or go to your local emergency room.

Swelling: Swelling and redness in and around the site of surgery is normal and expected. Swelling also commonly involves the eyes when surgery is done on the forehead, nose, cheeks, and other areas on the face. The swelling typically starts a day or two after surgery and can get worse before it gets better. Extra strength Tylenol, ice to the swollen areas, and keeping the head elevated can help speed the resolution of the swelling. The swelling will eventually resolve over 1-3 weeks.

For true emergencies, please call our office to speak to a physician immediately.