

# Randolph Dermatology

AND MOHS MICROGRAPHIC SURGERY

## Skin Care After a Graft Placement

### For 24 hours after your surgery:

- Keep the surgical site dry and protected.

### For the next day and on all subsequent days until you return to our office in one week:

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Then, gently remove the outer white dressing.
- Gently cleanse any crusts and debris around the yellow dressing with hydrogen peroxide and fresh Q tips.
- Gently apply a generous amount of vaseline to the skin graft and immediately around the surgical site with fresh Q tips. Please be very gentle--if you apply force on the skin graft during this process it could shift, increasing the odds that it will not survive. Also, if you do not leave enough ointment on the skin graft and immediately around it, the graft could dry out, and a large crust may form over it. The presence of such a crust could slow healing and increase your chances for graft failure or a scar.
- Gently cover the skin graft with a non adherent pad and tape. Repeat this process daily.

### Special Considerations

- Do not smoke when you go home. Smoking deprives your skin of oxygen, which is needed for healing.
- Heavy lifting, bending down, and vigorous exercise should be stopped for two weeks after skin grafting. Activities that will raise your blood pressure or pulse, such as stair climbing, walking many blocks at a quick pace, or lifting heavy bags of groceries may deprive your graft of oxygen and other nutrients it needs to survive.
- Unless you have liver disease and cannot tolerate tylenol, tylenol is generally the safest medicine to take for post operative pain. Other pain medicines may thin your blood and increase your chances for bleeding.
- Bleeding is sometimes seen after surgery. A small amount of bleeding through the bandage within the first 24 hours after surgery is normal. If you notice more than a small amount of bleeding through your bandage, call the office at 973-366-6303 or go to the closest emergency room.

- If you develop severe pain or swelling around the surgery site you could be developing a hematoma (collection of blood under the skin). Please call us immediately for advice if this happens. You may need immediate treatment.
- If you develop a red, itchy rash at the surgery site, you may be developing a skin allergy to an antibiotic ointment or dressing. Consider stopping the use of antibiotic ointment and using vaseline only (which will not cause a skin allergy).
- If you develop pain, redness, swelling, warmth, pus, or foul odor at the surgery site you could have an infection. Please call us immediately if this happens. You may need oral antibiotics.
- If your surgery was on your face or head, please try and keep your head elevated for the next 48 hours. Bending down causes blood to rush to your face and head and may increase the likelihood of bleeding from the surgical site. Elevate your head on 2-3 pillows at night if possible.
- Wear only clean clothes over and around the surgery site to decrease the likelihood of acquiring a skin infection at the surgery site.
- Surgical scars tend to look better and better over the course of an entire year. After your sutures are out, you may ask about the possibility of treating the scar to improve its appearance. Ask for more details.