

After Suture Removal Instructions: Skin Grafted Wound

MATERIALS NEEDED

Mild (liquid) anti-bacterial soap (Softsoap, Dial, etc)
Vaseline or A&D Ointment (DO not use Neosporin)
Tape (Hypafix is the brand we use and recommend)

Cotton tip applicators or Q-tips
Non-stick dressing pads
Scissors

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARE OF SKIN GRAFTED AREA AFTER SUTURE REMOVAL

Some, but not all sutures have been removed from your skin graft. Avoid any friction that would disrupt the graft through cleaning, rubbing/scratching, or lying on the area. Continue to avoid bending at the waist and strenuous activity for another 1-2 weeks. Swimming is also not recommended.

1. Remove the bandage only for cleaning once daily. You may take a shower, wash your hair, and get the bandage wet. Please leave the bandage in place while in the shower. It should get wet, but will protect the graft from direct spray of water in the shower. Plan to change the wet dressing immediately after the shower.
2. Cleanse any drainage or dried ointment from graft and surrounding tissue using a Q-tip with mild soap and water solution. ***It is critical that cleaning be gentle and in the direction from center of graft outward – avoid sheering motion.***
3. Rinse and gently dry the wound with a new Q-tip in the same direction as cleaning.
4. Spread a layer of Vaseline or A&D ointment over the graft with a clean Q-tip. ***The graft must stay moist in order to take to the new area.***
5. Cut non-stick dressing pad to size and cover the wound. Secure with tape on all sides. ***Apply tape as needed to keep bandage airtight until next change.***
6. Continue this routine daily for 2-3 weeks, or as directed by your nurse. After this you may discontinue use of bandage, but continue applying Vaseline as needed to keep the graft area moist.
7. Avoid sun exposure to the graft site. Once the bandage has been discontinued, sunscreen should be applied to the graft to prevent darkening.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARE OF DONOR AREA

If sutures remain in your donor site, continue care you have been previously instructed.

If sutures were removed from your donor site today, proceed with the following instructions:

1. Wash suture line with anti-bacterial liquid soap and water daily. A nurse will instruct you concerning the need for further application of Vaseline or dressing. SEE BELOW:
2. If steri-strips have been applied:
 - Allow them to fall off on their own. **DO NOT PULL STERISTRIPS OFF!**
 - Continue to gently wash daily with mild soap and water.
 - DO NOT apply Vaseline or sunscreen until steri-strips have fallen off.
 - The ends of the strips may be trimmed off as they loosen and lift.
 - Steri-strips should remain on the skin from several days to 2 weeks. They may be gently removed after 2 weeks.
3. If skin adhesive has been applied:
 - DO NOT swim in chlorinated pools/hot tubs. Chlorine dissolves the skin adhesive.
 - DO NOT apply anything to the site such as ointments, lotions, creams, or make up.
 - For cosmetic purposes or to protect from prolonged sunlight, you may cover your site with non-stick dressing and tape. Be sure the tape is not applied too closely to the glued area, as this may pull the glue off when the bandage is changed.
 - If the adhesive begins to peel DO NOT pull it off or pick at it. Please allow it to fall off naturally. This can take up to 2 weeks.
4. Apply sunscreen daily once the area is completely healed to prevent darkening of the scar line.

Additional Information regarding donor site:

1. Pimple-like bump(s) may appear along suture line. This may indicate that your body is “spitting” out internal sutures rather than dissolving them. No intervention is needed. It may take internal sutures several months to dissolve.
2. Suture line will remain pink for several weeks to several months. Mild swelling is common, but will resolve. Firmness of the scar is common.
3. Begin scar massage in 5 weeks unless otherwise instructed. Massage with firm pressure in the direction of the scar with Vaseline or a moisturizing lotion for three minutes three times daily. You may also use an over the counter scar therapy at that time. Use as directed per package label.
4. If you experience fever, excessive drainage, separation of the skin edges, bleeding, or abnormal scarring, please call us during normal business hours.

Further questions can be addressed through our office at 910-256-2100.

Our normal business hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30am – 5:00pm and 7:30am – 1:00pm on Wednesday and Friday.