

Care of your split skin graft donor site (Mefix dressing)

This leaflet gives information and advice on caring for your donor site wound.

What to expect

After any surgery, especially when performed under general anaesthetic, it is normal to feel tired.

The donor site, from where the surgeon has taken a fine layer of skin to graft, will look like a large graze. The wound may ooze blood or straw coloured fluid. This is normal. A series of dressings will be in place and consist of:

- Next to the skin is a dressing called “Mefix”.
- Next to the Mefix are several layers of gauze.
- Cotton wool.
- The outer layer is a bandage.

After 48 to 72 hours the bandage and cotton wool may be removed as long as oozing is under control. The Mefix dressing will remain over the wound for up to 14 days.

Once the dressings are down to Mefix only, it is possible for you to bath or shower normally. It is OK to get the Mefix wet. Just dry it afterwards with a towel or with a hair dryer on a cool setting.

The donor site can smell. This is associated with the bleeding that occurs at the time of the operation. As blood dries it has an unpleasant odour. This does not usually mean that there is a problem.

As the donor site heals you will be asked to trim the edges of dressing as they lift with a pair of scissors. This will prevent it being caught on clothing and pulling on the wound. Sometimes the dressing will fall off by itself.

We would expect the wound to be healed within six weeks.

Once the donor site is healed you are encouraged to moisturise the area with perfume free moisturising lotion such as E45 on a daily basis. It is important to wash the site regularly otherwise it may become very moist and cause raw patches.

What NOT to do at home:

It is important to remember that you will not be able to drive or operate machinery for at least 24 hours after a general anaesthetic.

Try not to apply pressure to the donor site so avoid wearing support garments such as tight fitting jeans, support stockings, lycra shorts etc.

The site should be protected from sunlight. Please use a high factor sun screen for at least two years following surgery as the site will be at risk of burning.

Pain management after surgery

Donor sites can be sore particularly when the skin is taken from the leg. The soreness is worse first thing in the morning when you start to mobilise. As you become more active the soreness will improve.

Painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen can help reduce pain if taken on a regular basis for the first 1-2 weeks. Avoid Aspirin if possible as this may cause bleeding at the site of the operation.

Problems to look out for

- Increasing smell from donor site.
- Increasing redness around the site.
- Increase in pain.

If you experience any of the above, contact us, your GP or practice nurse as soon as possible.

Please feel free to discuss any questions or worries you may have with your doctor. If you encounter any problems please contact us on the phone numbers below.

Department of Plastic Surgery

Royal Berkshire Hospital
0118 322 7083

West Berkshire Community
Hospital
01635 273390

John Radcliffe Hospital
01865 231173

Alternatively, call the ward or unit you were discharged from:

Adult Day Surgery Unit (ADSU): 0118 322 7622

Dorrell Ward: 0118 322 7172 / 8101

Visit the Trust website at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Based upon information from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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