

## Care of your split skin graft to the lower leg

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

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### What to expect

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

It is important to keep the affected leg elevated on a small stool or sofa at rest. You may walk as advised by your discharging nurse.

You must keep the dressings dry and intact if advised to do so. The dressing will usually remain in place for up to two weeks.

Two layers of tubigrip (a stretchy elastic bandage) will have been put on your leg. You may remove one of these for comfort at rest or at night. You may leave off these bandages once your graft is fully healed and the leg feels comfortable without support.

Once your skin graft and the donor site are fully healed you may massage the areas twice daily with a non perfumed moisturising cream such as E45. The areas may be pink initially but this should fade over time.

### 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.

Avoid direct sunlight to the graft area. Always protect your graft by keeping the leg covered or applying a total sun-block cream.

### Pain management after surgery

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

- Fresh red bleeding.
- Infection (redness, pain, oozing or discharge).

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

### Follow up

You will be asked to return for a review in the Outpatients Department 1-2 weeks following your operation.

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
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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](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

Based upon information from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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