

Care of your split skin graft to the scalp

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

What to expect

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

You will have a “tie over” dressing which looks like a sponge, covering the skin graft. Do not remove the “tie over” dressing. Leave in place until your visit to the Outpatients Department. After this visit you will probably need further dressings which will need to remain in place for at least another week.

Sleep upright for the next two to three nights. By this we mean, sitting upright in bed or an armchair and supported by pillows.

Once the area is healed, you may wash and treat the graft as a normal part of your skin. You may wash your hair as normal, but if you use a hairdryer it is advised that you keep this on a cool setting.

Moisturise the area twice daily with a non perfumed cream such as E45.

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.

Keep the dressing dry – you may bathe, but try to avoid getting the area very wet. It is probably easier if you do not wash your hair until the tie over dressing is removed.

Avoid direct sunlight to the graft area. Always protect your graft by wearing a hat 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

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

Adult Day Surgery Unit (ADSU): 0118 322 7622 Dorrell Ward: 0118 322 7172 / 8101
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Visit the Trust website at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Based upon information from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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