

RICHMOND PLASTIC SURGEONS

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SKIN GRAFT POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

FULL THICKNESS skin graft donor site: Full thickness skin grafts leave you with an incision at the donor site (the place from which the skin was taken), and this heals as a straight line scar, typically using all dissolvable stitches. Common donor sites are behind the ear (for small skin grafts for the face) or the lower abdomen (for larger skin grafts in other body parts). If it was taken from behind the ear, apply antibiotic ointment (e.g. bacitracin, polysporin, Neosporin, etc.) to the incision 2 – 3 times daily. If it was taken from another location, it is usually covered by skin glue which eventually falls off on its own. The donor site incisions may get wet in the shower, letting the water run over them, then just pat everything dry. If the skin glue has not fallen off, you may start to scrub it in the shower or peel it off at one week after surgery. If you are having spotting from any of your incisions, you should place a gauze bandage as needed until it remains dry.

SPLIT THICKNESS skin graft donor site (thigh): The area will look like a brush burn, or road rash, which is essentially what it is. The thigh is usually more painful than the area where the skin graft is placed. You will have either a clear plastic bandage (tegaderm) or a silver/black sponge bandage and tape (Mepilex Ag) covering the area. This Mepilex dressing absorbs any drainage. However, if you have a clear tegaderm dressing, it is normal for fluid to build up under it and look a little bit like a water balloon. The fluid may be clear or bloody. If the tegaderm dressing is disturbed, the fluid may leak out. This is not harmful, but it can soil your clothes or sheets.

Underneath the Mepilex or tegaderm dressing is a thin piece of specialized gauze called adaptic, which is held in place with a few dissolvable stitches. After the outer dressing is removed by your surgeon, allow the adaptic underneath it to dry out, which may take a few days. Do not try to peel off the underneath gauze (the adaptic) since this will be painful and probably bleed. Once the adaptic is dry, the edges will eventually start to curl up as the skin heals underneath it. You can simply trim the free edges with a scissor as they curl up, and eventually the whole thing will fall off.

Do not get the mepilex or tegaderm dressing on your thigh wet. After it is removed from the thigh, you may get the adaptic dressing underneath it wet in the shower, then pat it dry. No tub baths, hot tubs, swimming, etc. until the adaptic has fallen off your thigh and the site is healed. After it is healed, you may use moisturizing lotion. Avoid sun exposure for 6 – 12 months as this may cause the scar to darken.

BOLSTER: The place where the skin graft is placed will typically have a bandage (bolster) covering it to keep the skin graft in place as it heals. This bolster bandage may be a yellow gauze which is stitched into place so that it does not move. Or it may be a sponge dressing attached to a mechanical pump. It is normal for occasional drops of blood or fluid to leak around it for the first 1 – 2 days after surgery. **DO NOT GET THE BOLSTER WET.** Do not remove the bolster. It will be removed in the office around one week after surgery. After it is removed, follow your surgeon's instructions regarding additional care or bandages. Call the office if the bolster becomes dislodged.

MEDICATIONS: take as directed. Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medications. Avoid aspirin for two weeks after surgery. You may take non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (e.g. ibuprofen) starting the day of surgery. Ibuprofen can be taken instead of, or in addition to, your prescription pain medication, according to the directions on the bottle.

PHARMACY: Your prescriptions were sent electronically to the following pharmacy: _____

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT:

() Your appointment is scheduled for _____.

West Creek Office of Richmond Plastic Surgeons
1630 Wilkes Ridge Parkway, Suite 201
Richmond, Virginia 23233

Midlothian Office of Richmond Plastic Surgeons
14401 Sommerville Court
Midlothian, Virginia 23113

() Please call **804-285-4115** to schedule an appointment for _____.