



Bridget Walker, MD

~ Mohs Micrographic Surgeon

WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SKIN GRAFTS

FOR THE FIRST WEEK:

Bolster dressing:

- Keep the bandage **in place and dry for 1 week** until you are seen back in the office.
- If the tape starts to loosen, try to reinforce it with additional medical tape.
- If the tape bandage comes completely off, do not disturb the yellow gauze underneath that has been stitched in place! You should fashion a new taped-on bandage with non-adherent gauze and medical tape.

Restrictions:

- Avoid lifting anything heavier than 10 pounds for 10 days after surgery. Heavy lifting may cause stitches to pop.
- Avoid vigorous activity and exercise for 1 week after surgery (walking is okay). Increases in heart rate and blood pressure may cause increased bleeding. After 1 week, you may gradually resume your normal activities.
- Avoid swimming for 2 weeks after surgery.

ONCE THE BOLSTER HAS BEEN REMOVED AFTER 1 WEEK:

Supplies to purchase:

- Cotton-tip applicators (e.g. Q-tips)
- Petrolatum ointment (e.g. Vaseline)
- Non-adherent dressing (e.g. Telfa)
- Gauze
- Paper tape (e.g. 3M micropore brown paper tape)
- Gentle soap (e.g. Dove)

Bandaging:

- Wash your hands before each bandage change.
- Remove the bandage and gently clean the area with soap and water. Do not scrub the graft, just let soapy water run over the area. Rinse with water and gently pat dry with gauze or a clean, dry cloth.
- Apply a thin layer of petrolatum ointment over the wound with a cotton-tip applicator.
- Cut the non-adherent dressing with a clean pair of scissors to fit over the wound.
- Secure the dressing with paper tape.
- Repeat daily for **14 days**.

Optional:

- After 2 months, you may start to massage the scar. Place petrolatum ointment over the area and firmly massage the scar for 5 minutes up to 3 times per day. Scar massage helps the “puffiness” smooth out and the redness fade more quickly.
- Silicone scar sheets or gel (e.g. Scar Away, Silagen) have been shown to help improve the appearance of scars. You may start to use these 2 month after surgery if desired.