

Patient Information

## Plastic Surgery Unit

# Donor sites for split skin grafts dressed in an alginate

A donor site is an area where a shaving of your skin is taken. This is applied to a raw area elsewhere on your body to help it heal, such as a surgical or non-surgical wound. The common areas for donor sites are the thigh and upper arm, but could also be the back, buttocks or abdomen.

The dressing you have in place over your donor site is an alginate - usually Sorbsan or Kaltostat.

### Care of the donor site

- Do not remove the bandage over your donor site. If the dressing slips, it may be re-padded or taped to stay in place.
- Leave the donor site dressing for at least 10 to 14 days.
- If the dressing oozes a little during the night, apply a bandage or a dressing over the top.
- Do not move the dressing next to the raw wound under any circumstances.
- The wound will weep, so it may smell at times. This is normal and nothing to worry about. However, if the wound smells particularly offensive and is painful, contact the Unit for advice.
- The donor site may be painful and tight for the first few days after the operation. You can take painkillers, such as paracetamol, to reduce this.



## Patient Information

### Removing the dressing

The dressing will be removed in the plastic surgery dressing clinic. If the area is healed when the dressing is removed in clinic, no more dressings are needed.

- Wash the donor site using non-scented soap.
- Apply E45 or Nivea moisturising cream twice daily to moisturise the new skin.
- The cream should be washed off using non-scented soap before the next application to avoid cysts and blackheads forming.

### Aftercare of a donor site

- Donor sites will usually heal with minimal scarring and no impairment of sensation. To keep the donor site scar soft and supple, continue to apply E45 or Nivea cream twice daily.
- Protect the donor site from extremes of temperature. Over the next 3 to 6 months, apply total sunscreen (SPF factor 25 or higher) to the newly healed donor site if it's likely to be exposed to the direct sunlight.

### More information

If you have any questions about the service or your treatment, please contact:

Plastic Dressing Clinic

024 7696 6474

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5225 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smokefree policy.

## Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

[www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback)



### Document History

Department:	Plastics
Contact:	25225
Updated:	July 2025
Review:	July 2027
Version:	7
Reference:	HIC/LFT/332/07