

Patient Information

Plastic Surgery Unit

Donor Sites for Split Skin Grafts

Patient information leaflet for care of donor sites dressed with an alginate (Sorbsan)

Introduction

A donor site is an area from which a shaving of your skin is taken (harvested) and then applied to a raw area, such as a surgical or non-surgical wound or defect, elsewhere on your body to help it heal. The common areas for donor sites are the thigh and upper arm, but could 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

- You probably have a bandage over your donor site which should not be removed. If the dressing slips then it may be re-padded or taped to stay in place.
- If you find that the dressing oozes a little during the night, you can simply apply a bandage or a dressing over the top.
- The dressing next to the raw wound should not be disturbed under any circumstances.
- The donor site dressing should be left intact for at least 10 – 14 days. The dressing will be removed in the plastic surgery dressing clinic.
- Due to the fact that the wound weeps, it may smell at times. This is quite normal and nothing to be concerned about. However if it is particularly offensive and painful, please contact the unit for advice.



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- The donor site may be painful and tight for the first few days after the operation. You are advised to take painkillers if required, such as paracetamol.
- If the area is healed when the dressing is removed in clinic, no further dressings are required. The area may be washed using non-scented soap. E45 or Nivea moisturising cream should be applied 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.

After care 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. Total sunscreen (SPF factor 25 or higher) should be used if the newly healed donor site is likely to be exposed to the direct sunlight in the course of the next three to six months.

Further information

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

Plastic Dressing Clinic: Telephone 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 smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

Document History	
Department:	Plastics
Contact:	25225
Updated:	June 2022
Review:	June 2024
Version:	6.3
Reference:	HIC/LFT/332/07