

Plastic Surgery Unit

Donor sites for split skin grafts

An information leaflet for the care of donor sites dressed in adhesive retention tape.

A donor site is an area from which a shaving of your skin is taken. This shaving is then applied to a raw area (a surgical or non-surgical wound/defect), elsewhere on your body. This is done to help the raw area heal. The common areas for donor sites are the thigh and upper arm, but could also be your back, buttocks or abdomen.

The dressing you have in place over your donor site is adhesive retention tape (Mefix/Hypafix). This has been applied in direct contact with the raw surface of the donor site.

Care of the donor site

- You may have a bandage over your donor site which can be removed three days after the operation. Oozing from the donor site will stop around this time.
- The tape covering the donor site must not be removed under any circumstances
- If you find that the tape dressing oozes a little during the night. You can apply a bandage or dressing over the top.
- The donor site dressing should be left intact for at least 10 – 14 days and will be removed at clinic.
- The donor site may be painful and tight for the first few days post-operatively. You are advised to take painkillers on a regular basis if



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needed.

- The adhesive in the dressing is oil soluble, which helps with removing the tape.

The night before your clinic appointment (approximately two weeks after your operation), smother the dressing in cooking oil and then cover with a piece of cling film. The dressing will generally lift off easily at clinic the next day. You can also apply alcohol hand gel to the adhesive edges and massage. After several minutes, the dressing should also lift off easily.

- If the area is healed when the dressing is removed, then no further dressings are required. The area may be washed using non-scented soap, and a non-scented moisturising cream such as E45 or Nivea 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.

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 a non-scented moisturiser twice daily.

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Protect the donor site from extremes of temperature. Total sun block (SPF 25 or higher) should be used if the newly healed donor site is likely to be exposed to the direct sunlight during the next three to six months.

Further information

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

Plastic Dressing Clinic: Tel 024 7696 6474

Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, 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

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