

Plastic surgery dressing clinic (PDC)

Wound care advice for skin graft and donor site management

This leaflet explains how to take care of your wounds when you are discharged from hospital. You will be seen in the plastics dressing clinic (PDC) approximately one week after discharge which is run by nurses who will advise you on the care and management of your wound.

You will have two types of wounds; the **graft site** which is the area where your skin lesion was removed (or your injury site) and the **donor site** where the skin used for the graft is taken from (most commonly the thigh).

The graft site

The graft site dressing will usually be left undisturbed for 5-7 days to help optimise the graft 'take'. If your graft is on your head you will have been advised to sleep semi upright and to avoid bending, this is to reduce the chance of bleeding. If your graft is in an area where movement might disturb it such as a limb you should elevate it to reduce swelling. Your dressing will have been attached by stitches or metal clips to help stop it from moving and shearing the graft away from the newly developing blood supply. This dressing will be removed in the plastic dressing clinic and a new dressing applied to help hold the graft in place and absorb any moisture.

The donor site

The donor site dressing will usually be left undisturbed for two weeks unless there is a clinical need to remove it earlier. This wound may be painful so taking simple pain killers such as paracetamol regularly should help.



Patient Information

Once healed it is important to apply moisturiser to the donor site twice a day to help the scar mature and prevent excess drying of the skin.

Looking after your wounds at home

The skin graft must be protected from trauma or significant stretching for 2 to 3 weeks. Exercise that might stretch or injure the graft should be avoided for 3 to 4 weeks.

It is usual for patients to manage their own wounds in between appointments at the plastics dressing clinic. Alternatively dressings can be done by your practice nurse at your GP surgery. The clinic will supply enough dressings for one or two dressing changes. For wounds which require dressings for longer periods additional dressings will need to be obtained by you on prescription from your GP.

What to look out for

Signs of wound infection can include:

- increased pain
- redness spreading from the wound
- swelling
- skin surrounding the wound hot to the touch
- oozing that is green/cream in colour
- feeling generally unwell with a high temperature

Who to contact if you suspect your wound is infected

If you have any of the signs of infection indicated above you should seek medical advice from your GP during working hours or contact NHS111 or Accident and Emergency outside of working hours as you may need a course of antibiotics.

If you have any other concerns about your wound you can contact the plastics dressing clinic from **8am-12pm Monday-Friday** for advice either by leaving a message on our voicemail **02476 969238** or by emailing pdcc@uhcw.nhs.uk . We aim to respond to you the same day.

Long term care of your graft and donor site

What will my graft look like?

Initially the graft appears reddish/purple and indented which usually fades quite quickly. Any indentation will gradually fill out to some extent. It can take up to 18 months for a scar to 'mature', usually leaving a pale, soft, flat and supple surface.

Moisturiser

Once healed it is important to apply moisturiser to both graft and donor site daily for at least three months as this will help prevent drying and improve the overall appearance of the wounds.

Sun protection

It is important to protect your newly healed skin from sun exposure. We recommend that you keep your skin covered with light clothing and wear a hat when outdoors. It is also important to apply factor 50 sunscreen.

Plastics dressing clinic nursing team	
Sunita Mahay	Lead ANP(Advanced nurse practitioner)
Claire Addie	ANP
Leanne Bidad	Plastics CNS (Clinical nurse specialist)
Rachel Reece	Plastics CNS
Jane Bayliss	Plastics CNS
Lauren Bench	Staff nurse
Alex Woodcock	Staff nurse
Tasmin Mills	Staff nurse

Patient Information

We hope you find this information leaflet useful.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact insert contact telephone number 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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