

Plastic Surgery Dressing Clinic

Wound care advice for skin graft and donor sites

You will visit the Plastics Dressing Clinic (PDC) 1 week after you're discharged.

The clinic is run by nurses who will tell you how to care for and manage your wounds.

You will have 2 types of wounds:

- the **graft** site
- the **donor** site

The graft site

The graft site is the area where your skin lesion was removed (your injury site).

A dressing was attached using stitches or metal clips to stop the graft from moving or shearing away from the developing blood supply.

We will review the skin graft site within 5 to 7 days.

The dressing is removed in the plastic dressing clinic. A new dressing is applied to help hold the graft in place and absorb any moisture.

- If your graft is on your head, sleep semi-upright and avoid bending. This will reduce the chance of bleeding.
- If your graft is in an area where movement might cause damage to the skin, raise the area to reduce swelling.



Patient Information

The donor site

The donor site is where the skin used for the graft is taken from (usually the thigh). The donor site dressing is usually left for 2 weeks.

The donor site wound may be painful. Taking painkillers such as paracetamol can help to reduce the pain.

Once the donor site wound is healed, it's important to apply moisturiser to it twice a day. This will help the scar to mature and prevent your skin from drying.

Looking after your wounds at home

It's usual for people to manage their wounds in between appointments at the Plastics Dressing Clinic. But dressings can be done by your practice nurse at your GP surgery. The clinic will supply enough dressings for 1 or 2 dressing changes.

For wounds which need dressings for longer, you'll need to get your dressings on prescription from your GP.

Protect the skin graft from trauma or significant stretching for 3 weeks.

Avoid exercise that might stretch or injure the graft for 4 weeks.

Infection

Your wound may become infected. The symptoms of a wound infection are:

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

Patient Information

If you think your wound is infected:

Speak to your GP if you think your wound is infected.

Outside of working hours, contact 111 or visit A&E. You may need a course of antibiotics.

If you have any concerns about your wound, contact:

Plastics Dressing Clinic

Monday to Friday, 8am to Midday

Leave a message on our voicemail **024 7696 9238** or by email pdcc@uhcw.nhs.uk. We aim to respond to you the same day.

What your graft will look like

At first, your graft appears reddish or purple and indented. The colour 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'. This usually leaves a pale, soft, flat, and supple surface.

Moisturiser

Apply moisturiser to both the graft and donor site daily for at least 3 months. This will prevent the wound sites from drying and improve the appearance of the wounds.

Sun protection

Protect your healed skin from sun exposure. You can do this by:

- keeping your skin covered with light clothing
- wearing a hat when outdoors
- applying factor 50 sunscreen

Patient Information

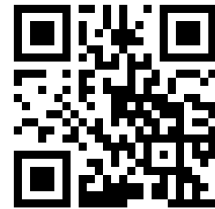
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