

SKIN GRAFT INSTRUCTIONS

What Can I Expect After Surgery?

There will be a mild to moderate amount of pain and discomfort associated with the surgery. This should be easily controlled with oral medications.

The discomfort and pain should begin to decrease within 48 hours after surgery and a significant increase in pain after this period should prompt you to call the office.

All incisions that are made in the skin will heal by forming a scar. Dr. Verret will always make your incision as hidden as possible. Secondary procedures on scars (dermabrasion, laser resurfacing or scar revision) may be suggested by Dr. Verret to further camouflage it.

Initially after surgery, incisions will often appear to be raised and more red than desirable. Don't worry, they will eventually flatten and the redness will generally fade. However, your incision will not be completely healed for about 1 year after surgery

Things To Remember

- Keep the bolster, the yellow dressing that is sewn in place, dry until you see Dr. Verret in one week.
- If you had skin taken from your leg, you can remove the outer white covering and replace it as needed immediately. Under the white dressing a cellophane looking covering with a white gauze directly against your leg. You can remove the cellophane and the white gauze 3 days after your procedure. Replace the dressing with a Vaseline soaked gauze and change the gauze at least twice per day (morning and night) until you see Dr. Verret.
- If you are a smoker, you should not smoke for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after surgery. Smoking and chewing tobacco inhibit your circulation and can significantly compromise your surgical outcome.
- Do not take any aspirin or any anti-inflammatory compounds for 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after your surgery unless you first discuss it with Dr. Verret. For some smaller procedures this may not be necessary so be sure to ask Dr. Verret if you have any question.
- Sleep with your head elevated 40 degrees for two weeks; an additional pillow or two under your mattress may help, if necessary.
- If you notice some bleeding from the incision, simply apply firm pressure and ice to the area for 15 to 20 minutes. If the bleeding persists, contact the office.
- Stay up (sitting, standing, walking around) as much as possible after you return home - this promotes a decrease in facial swelling. Of course, you should rest when you tire.



- Avoid bending or lifting heavy things for one week. Besides aggravating swelling, this may raise your blood pressure and start bleeding. No lifting over 5 pounds the first week, 25 pounds the second week.
- In some instances, you can begin light exercise after 10 to 14 days. In such a circumstance, small surgical paper tape across the incision may be very useful.
- Avoid straining at stool, which also raises your blood pressure. If you feel you need a laxative, consult your local pharmacist as most stool softeners do not require a prescription.
- Avoid sunning the incision for 1 year. Whenever you go out in the sun, use at least an SPF 30 sunscreen.
- If external stitches were used during the surgery to close your incision, do not get the area wet for at least 48 hours after surgery. Instead, you should clean the area by rolling a Q-tip moistened (not soaked) with hydrogen peroxide over the incision, and then gently applying a small amount of antibiotic ointment on it. This procedure should be repeated about 4 times per day. You may purchase the ointment in any drug store without a prescription (polytopic, polysporin, or bacitracin). Do not use Neosporin ointment as this can cause a topical allergic reaction. After 1 week, you should generally use a small amount of Vaseline on the incision (after cleaning with hydrogen peroxide) instead of the antibiotic ointment because some people will develop a slight local skin reaction (redness) if antibiotic ointments are used for longer periods. Occasionally, Dr. Verret will ask you to use antibiotic ointments for longer than 1 week.
- Do not allow drying of the incision or crust formation. Keeping the site moist with the above procedures will hasten healing and provide you with the nicest scar possible.
- Take only prescribed medication or Tylenol, or Ibuprofen.
- You may shower or bathe 48 hours after surgery, but do not let the spray directly strike the area of your incision. Do not be afraid to get the sutures lines or sutures wet.
- Don't go swimming, diving, water skiing, or participate in strenuous athletic activity for at least one month after surgery.
- Do not wear make up over the incisions until the sutures are removed (or have dissolved), and a thin layer of new skin covers the area. This usually takes 7 to 10 days. You should generally not wear make up directly over the incision until you are told it is all right to do so by Dr. Verret.
- Placing bandages or gauze dressings on the incisions is generally optional after the first full day beyond surgery. Dr. Verret may ask you to place small surgical paper tapes across the incision (steri-strips). These tapes are useful to take tension off of some incisions, giving a thinner scar in the end.
- External sutures should be kept clean and dry. Dissolvable sutures will disappear on their own within 5 to 7 days. Non dissolvable sutures should generally be removed (unless you are told otherwise) within 1 week of surgery. If surgical staples have been used in closing an incision in the scalp, they are often removed between 10 to 14 days after surgery. Sometimes, they will be gradually removed over a couple of visits to the office.
- You can expect to experience some numbness in the area of the incision for several weeks after the surgery. Occasionally, this numbness may persist to a small degree indefinitely.
- It is not unusual during the healing phase to note some irregularities under the skin. These small distortions will gradually subside and eventually resolve. Small bumps under the



skin may be present if deep sutures were used during the surgery. These bumps will almost always flatten out as the deep sutures are dissolved by your body.

Contact the Office Immediately

If you notice any of the following, please contact the office immediately at 972-608-0100:

- significant increase in pain after the first 48 hours following surgery
- development of a temperature exceeding 100.0 degrees.
- the area of the incision becomes red, has purulent drainage, or is very warm to touch.

If any of the above should occur after regular office hours, call the office and select the option to have Dr. Verret paged. For whatever reason, if you notice one of the above changes and cannot reach us at our office or through any of the alternate means, present yourself to the emergency department for evaluation.

Recovery Timetable

- **Day 1** Return home, leave any surgical dressing undisturbed for first day after surgery.
- **Day 2** Aching, throbbing. Start cleaning wound with hydrogen peroxide followed by application of antibiotic ointment. Repeat 4 times per day.
- **Days 5-7** Stitches removed or dissolving.
- **Weeks 7-14** Clean wound with hydrogen peroxide followed by application of Vaseline (unless told otherwise by Dr. Verret). Repeat 2 times per day. May use concealing makeup.
- **6-12 Months** Scar is flattening and red color is going away.
- **1 Year** Final result.

Remember

If you have any questions at any time, do not hesitate to call. We do not like surprises and would much rather hear about a small annoyance before it becomes a big problem.

