

## HOW TO CARE FOR A SKIN GRAFT

You will have two areas covered with dressings from your surgery. The **donor site** and the **graft site**.

The **donor site** is from your upper thigh where a shave of skin has been taken.

The **graft site** is where the shave of skin has been used to cover the area where the skin cancer has been removed.

The **donor site** will be covered with a dressing that is to be left on for 10-14 days. You may see blood showing through this padded dressing. This is OK and normal.

It is best to leave this dressing on closer to 14 days to give the area time to heal and new skin to grow.

At 7 days your graft dressing is removed by our nurse, however the donor site is left for another week to be removed by you at home in the shower.

### SKIN GRAFTS

Once your dressing is removed by our nurse at your post-operative appointment, a plan will be made on how to care for your graft moving forward.

Your graft will need Paw Paw ointment applied twice a day for up to 6 weeks after surgery.

You may need to continue to cover your graft with a dressing to prevent your clothing from rubbing on the graft or it being knocked and damaged.

Protect the graft from sun exposure for the first year to ensure the best long term appearance of your scar.

### HOW LONG DO I LEAVE MY DRESSING ON FOR?

After your initial post-operative dressing is removed another dressing will be applied to your graft. This dressing stays on for another 3-5 days. Do not get this dressing wet.

### WHEN CAN I SHOWER AND GET MY WOUND WET?

Once you take the second dressing off you can get your graft wet in the shower. Do not soak in a bath until you are fully healed (which may not be for 4-8 weeks).

### DO I NEED TO KEEP COVERING MY GRAFT?

Yes, you may need to keep covering your graft to protect it from getting damaged. You can shower, apply paw paw ointment and cover the graft until it settles in.

You can cover the graft with a Non Adhesive dressing like Melolin and secure it with Micropore tape, or a padded dressing such as Mepilex® Border.

### WHERE DO I GET DRESSINGS FROM?

Non Adhesive Dressings such as **Elastoplast Non Stick dressing** with **Non irritating paper tape** to secure the dressing can be purchased at supermarkets, such as Woolworths.

Non Adhesive dressings, such as Melolin can be purchased at the Chemist and secured with micropore tape.

Mepilex® Border dressings can be purchased at the Chemist.

### **HOW DO I CARE FOR MY DONOR SITE?**

This dressing can be removed between 10-14 days. You can begin by softening the edges of the dressing with moisturiser. Then while you are in the shower take the dressing off.

The dressing should lift off, however if any part of the dressing is sticking then use the water from the shower to help remove the dressing without damaging the healing skin.

You will have a red rectangle where the skin has been shaved off. You will need to keep this skin moisturised as it heals. You may need to cover this area with a Non Adhesive dressing if it is sensitive to your clothing touching it or if it is still sore and healing.

If you have any concerns with how your graft is healing you can email a photo for review through to our nurse at: [nurse@aspireplasticsurgery.com.au](mailto:nurse@aspireplasticsurgery.com.au)