

Post-Operative Wound Care Instructions

Skin Graft Wound Care

- No strenuous activity for 48 hours. No straining or lifting items over 10 lbs. These activities could increase bleeding. Avoid heavy exercising or any activity that may traumatize your surgical site for one week.
- Take Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen 1000mg every 6 hours) as needed for discomfort.
- Leave the bandage on your _____ in place and dry until you come in for your one week follow up. If the bandage becomes blood tinged or loose, reinforce it with gauze and tape. You may use a waterproof bandage or Press-N-Seal saran wrap over this bandage to keep it dry when showering.
- The skin graft donor site bandage on your _____ can be removed in 24 hours. This area can get wet once bandage is removed. This area should be covered with Vaseline and a bandage daily for one week.
- Smoking may impede wound healing and is not advised.
- Drinking alcohol can increase your risk for bleeding and is not advised for the first 48 hours after surgery.
- It is normal to have bruising and swelling around the surgical site. The bruising will fade in approximately two weeks but may linger for an extended period of time.
- For surgeries on the **arms, hands, legs, or feet**, elevate the area at rest with extra pillows to reduce swelling.
- For surgeries on the **head & neck** bruising and swelling may travel outside of the surgical site (i.e., from the forehead down to the eyes) and can get worse before it starts to improve. Keep head elevated with extra pillows when lying down or sleeping. Avoid bending down below your waist.

Expected Wound Healing

- Skin grafts can take up to three months to fully heal.
- You may have numbness, itchiness, and sensitivity to temperature changes for up to 18 months following surgery.
- Massaging the area several times a day for several minutes after the wound is completely healed will help the scar to soften and normalize faster. Begin massaging one month after surgery.
- It is common for skin grafts, particularly on the nose, to be slightly raised or uneven in color. In this case, you may benefit from a dermabrasion to help blend the graft site with the surrounding skin. This can be done once your skin graft has completely healed, 3 months or more after your surgery. If you are concerned with the cosmetic appearance of your healed skin graft, please call our office to schedule an appointment to discuss your options.

Discharge Medication Reconciliation

- Continue current at home medications.
- Oral medications administered at today's visit: _____
- Prescribed medications: _____

Possible Complications

BLEEDING

- Use tightly rolled up gauze or a dry washcloth to apply constant and direct pressure over the bandage for 20 minutes.
- Wait 5 minutes and then reapply pressure for an additional 20 minutes, if necessary. You can repeat this up to three times.
- Use additional gauze and tape to maintain pressure once the bleeding has stopped.

PAIN

- Post-operative pain should slowly get better, never worse.
- If pain is not controlled by Tylenol alone, try alternating Tylenol (acetaminophen 1000mg) and Motrin (ibuprofen 800mg) every 6 hours. Do not exceed 4000mg of acetaminophen or 3200 mg of ibuprofen in a 24 hour period.
- *Do not take Tylenol or Motrin if you have been previously instructed by your doctor to avoid either medication.*
- *Do not take Motrin if you are actively having problems with bleeding.*

SIGNS OF INFECTION

- Signs of infection can include increasing pain, redness spreading outside of the surgical site, large amounts of drainage, foul odor, swelling that does not improve over time, and warmth to area.
- A minimal amount of drainage from site can be normal.

CONTACT THE OFFICE AT (251) 544-6407 FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Bleeding not controlled by pressure.
- Increasing pain that is not controlled by over the counter medications.
- A drastic increase in swelling, redness, warmth, or pain around the wound.
- *If after hours, call the office number and follow the prompts to obtain Dr. Freeman's cell number.*
- *In the event of an emergency and you are unable to reach the physician, seek emergency medical treatment.*

Local Hospitals

Mobile Infirmary

5 Mobile Infirmary Circle
Mobile, AL 36607
(251) 435-2400

Providence Hospital

6801 Airport Blvd
Mobile, AL 36608
(251) 633-1000

South Baldwin Regional Medical Center

1613 N. McKenzie Street
Foley, AL 36535
(251) 949-3400

Sacred Heart

1549 Airport Blvd
Pensacola, FL 32504
(850) 416-7000

Grove Hill Memorial Hospital

295 South Jackson Street
Grove Hill, AL 36451
(251) 275-3191

Springhill Medical Center

3719 Dauphin Street
Mobile, AL 36608
(251) 344-9630

Thomas Hospital

750 Morphy Avenue
Fairhope, AL 36532
(251) 928-2375

North Baldwin Infirmary

1815 Hand Avenue
Bay Minette, AL 36507
(251) 937-5521

Jackson Medical Center

220 Hospital Drive
Jackson, AL 36545
(251) 246-9021