

## **WOUND CARE FOR SKIN GRAFT WITH BOLSTER (yellow bandage stitched over graft)**

### **1. FIRST WEEK AFTER SURGERY:**

- A. It is very important to keep the bandage moist with Vaseline so the skin graft underneath will remain moist and not dry out. (Note: No other bandage is required over the yellow bandage unless you desire one).
- B. Twice daily beginning the day after surgery a Q-tip moistened with tap water should be used to gently clean around the base of the yellow bandage and reapply Vaseline generously over and around the edges of the bandage to keep it moist.
- C. If the yellow bandage comes off before your one week appointment, keep the skin graft moist with Vaseline and apply a dressing over the graft with Telfa non-adherent gauze and tape or a Band-Aid (see 2C below)
- D. Do not get the bandage wet for 48 hrs. After that you may allow it to get wet in the shower, but do not go swimming or submerge it.
- E. Beginning 48 hours after the surgery, the donor site (where the skin graft was taken) should be cleaned twice daily until the stitches are removed. A Q-tip soaked in tap water and a small amount of liquid soap should be used to clean away any crust or debris from the stitches.  
If the donor site has no stitches (i.e. it is being left open to heal on its own) you may begin cleaning it 24 hours after the surgery. Clean the area twice daily with Q-tips soaked in tap water and a small amount of liquid soap. Rinse any residual soap away and apply Vaseline ointment generously. Apply a Band-Aid or Telfa non-stick gauze secured with paper tape or cloth tape.
- F. If you are a Smoker it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you **DO NOT SMOKE** for at least 3 weeks. Smoking may "kill" the skin graft.

### **2. SECOND WEEK AFTER SURGERY:**

- A. At your follow-up appointment we will remove the yellow bandage. The skin graft may appear bruised when the bandage is removed. This is normal and the color will improve over several weeks time.
- B. You may get the skin graft wet in the shower, but do not use a wash cloth directly on the graft.
- C. Twice daily, the skin graft will need to be gently cleaned with a Q-tip moistened with tap water and a generous amount of Vaseline applied directly over the skin graft followed by a Telfa dressing (non-adherent gauze) and tape to secure the Telfa over the graft to keep it moist. A Band-Aid may be used instead of the Telfa.
- D. If a dressing is not used over the graft, the Vaseline needs to be applied more often, at least 4-5 times daily. This care will need to continue for at least 2 weeks after the yellow bandage is removed or until the graft does not appear to be drying out when the Vaseline is discontinued.
- E. Continue cleaning and bandaging the donor site as you have been doing for 2 more days after the stitches are removed or until healed if it is being allowed to heal on its own (usually 4 weeks).
- F. Makeup may be applied over the skin graft after it has healed (usually 2 to 3 weeks after the yellow dressing is removed).

### **3. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Unless the doctor states otherwise, take Extra Strength Tylenol according to the package directions for pain as needed. If you are having pain that is not controlled by Tylenol, a prescription pain reliever may be given. Do not take both Tylenol and the prescription pain reliever. You should take one or the other. If you are prescribed an antibiotic, please take it as directed until you have finished all of the pills, unless you are not tolerating it for some reason. Please contact the doctor if you are not tolerating the medication.

Alcohol should be avoided for at least 3 days after surgery. You should avoid heavy lifting and exercise until the sutures are removed or as approved by the doctor.

### **4. CONTACT THE DOCTOR IF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS:**

- A. Bleeding which saturates your dressing (spotting of dressing is expected). To stop the bleeding hold direct pressure over the dressing for 20 minutes (without peeking). If the wound is still bleeding repeat the process.
- B. Temperature greater than 100 degrees F or 38 degrees C.
- C. Signs of infection, i.e., redness, swelling, foul-smelling drainage, pain or heat.

A PHYSICIAN CAN BE REACHED AT 704-295-0000 during office hours. If you have an emergency related to your surgery after office hours, please call 704-295-0000 and follow instructions for reaching the doctor on call.