

# PATIENT INFORMATION

## Instructions After Your Skin Graft Surgery

### GENERAL

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**Elevate:** To minimize swelling and pain, keep your hand elevated above your heart as much as possible

- Hold your hand against your chest when awake. Place your hand on a few pillows at night

**Pain relief:** mild pain and discomfort is expected

- You can take Acetaminophen (Tylenol®), and add ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or naproxen (Aleve®) if Tylenol® alone is not enough

### INCISION CARE

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**Until the first follow-up:** keep all the dressings dry

**After the first follow-up:**

- Definitions
  - Recipient site: where the skin graft was applied
  - Donor site: where the skin graft was taken from
- Wash both sites under clean running water (sink or shower)
  - To prevent the graft from shearing off at the recipient site:
    - Be gentle
    - Dab dry
  - **Do NOT submerge it in dirty water** (bath, swimming pool or hot tub)
- If the Steri-Strips™ fall off on their own, don't worry. You may put a new bandage on and change it daily until two (2) weeks.
- Recipient site (skin graft) care
  - **First week** (after the follow-up): apply a thin layer of **Polysporin®** on the skin graft and cover with light gauze
  - **After one (1) week:** stop using **Polysporin®** and switch to any moisturizer such as a hand lotion or **Vaseline®**. Covering with light gauze is not necessary anymore
    - Using **Polysporin®** for more than one (1) week may result in redness and irritation (contact dermatitis)

**At two (2) weeks after surgery:** massage the scars at the donor site and along the rim of the recipient site

- Remove the Steri-Strips™ from the donor site if they are still on
- You can use any over-the-counter cream such as **Vaseline®** or hand lotion when massaging the scar
  - You may also use a scar cream, such as **SkinCeuticals Epidermal Repair** or **A-Derma Epitheliale**
  - **Do NOT use Polysporin®** (it will cause redness and irritation)
- Massage the scar along its length for at least 10 minutes, twice per day
- At first, you may notice that the scar is painful or sensitive – this is normal for many people; by massaging the scar, this sensation will go away
- If the knot has not fallen off after two (2) weeks, and it is irritating you, you can trim it flush with the skin
  - If the knot does not bother, you can leave it alone until it falls off on its own