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Skin Graft Wound Care

Recipient site (Where the skin graft was applied)

1. After the initial dressing is removed*, you may wash the skin graft gently with soap and water twice a day. You may wash the wound in the shower. Avoid having the shower water hitting the skin graft directly. The water may run over the skin graft.
2. Dry the wound with surgical gauze or a clean wash cloth. For the first week, apply a light layer of bacitracin or neosporin to the skin graft. Cover with a light gauze. After one week, you no longer need to use the bacitracin or neosporin. Continue to cover the skin graft with a light gauze if needed after each wash.
3. Do not submerge the graft or donor site in the tub or any body of water such as a swimming pool or hot tub.

Donor site (where the skin graft was taken from): Follow instructions **A or **B** depending on where your skin graft was taken from.**

A. Full thickness skin graft: (Generally the incision is at the groin/inguinal area)

1. Remove the postoperative dressing at the end of the first week after surgery*, if it has not been removed during the follow up visit. You may notice paper surgical tape (steristrips) on the incision. Leave the steristrips on. If the dressing comes off before one week accidentally. You may proceed with #2.
2. Wash the wound gently with soap and water. You may wash the wound in the shower and can get it wet in the shower.
3. Peel the steristrips off if they are still on by the end of the second week after surgery.

B. Split thickness skin graft (generally this wound is from the thigh region)

1. Leave the xeroform gauze on the thigh. The xeroform is the yellow-color bandage that was applied to the thigh at the time of the surgery.

2. If the thigh wound and the xeroform are still moist, dry the wound and the xeroform 3- 4 times a day by placing a hair dryer (on the low setting) or by sitting in front of a fan.
3. It will be fine to apply an ace wrap and dry dressing over the thigh and xeroform to keep it protected from any overlying clothing.*
4. As the wound heals, the xeroform gauze will lift from the edges. Trim the edges with a pair of scissor to uncover the newly healed skin. It may take 2 weeks or more before the xeroform lifts off complete.
5. You may apply a light moisturizer to the exposed the thigh skin once the xeroform has lifted off.
6. If the xeroform gets torn off prematurely, the underlying skin will bleed. Do not worry. Apply some pressure and wash the wound with soap and water. Continue with the wound care as above.

* If the dressings become stuck and are difficult to remove, do not pull on them. You can wet them with warm water and gently lift the gauze off of the wound.