

Full Thickness Skin Grafts (1 of 2)



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customer-care@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

A full thickness skin graft (FTSG) is placed on an area that needs new skin. It is kept in place with a dressing and stitches. You may hear this dressing referred to as a tie-over.

This dressing must not be touched for five to seven days to allow the skin graft to 'take'. The donor area is stitched together. Please keep both dressings as clean and dry as possible, until you attend the dressing clinic where your skin graft will be assessed.

After the skin graft

After any operation there is always some swelling in the affected part of your body. Elevation helps reduce swelling, pain and aids healing. To help prevent this:

- **graft is on your head** - sit upright during the day and use an extra pillow at night.
- **graft is on your arm** - during the day hold your arm up and sleep with your hand higher than your heart.
- **graft is on your leg** - when sitting down, put your leg up on cushions or similar, so that your leg is higher than your hip.

Infection and bleeding can reduce the likelihood of the skin graft taking. If you experience any of the following symptoms:

- fluid oozing through the dressing
- worsening pain or discomfort
- an unpleasant smell.

Please contact the Plastic Outpatients department Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm and Odstock Ward at all other times. Depending on your symptoms you may be asked to attend the dressing clinic or your local GP.

If you experience discomfort or pain from either your graft or your donor site, please take regular painkillers. Aspirin should not be taken (unless it is prescribed by your doctor), as this may cause bleeding under the skin graft.

What will my graft look like?

In the beginning the graft will be a darker pink than the surrounding skin and there is likely to be a hollow. Over time the graft will become paler, however the hollow may be permanent. Grafts can sometimes have a tendency to become 'lumpy', in this case you will need to continue to massage the skin

Plastic Dressing Clinic
01722 336262 ext 3254 or
Odstock Ward ext 3507

graft at least twice day using small circular actions to help break down the scar tissue (see the leaflet 'Massaging Healed Wounds' for more information).

Long term care of the skin graft

- try to avoid knocks and injuries to your new graft
- avoid direct sunlight on the graft for at least a year
- use sunblock on areas you are unable to protect with clothing
- massage the graft at least twice a day to keep the graft supple and help reduce any lumpiness.

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Plastics and Burns Unit
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