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## Postoperative Instruction Sheet

### **Facial Grafts**

Following your operation, you can expect:

1. Oozing and even bleeding. This is normal. When this occurs, you should:

**APPLY PRESSURE WITH A COOL PACK** (for 15 to 20 minutes each hour) and **KEEP THE AREA ELEVATED** (sit up). You should find that the bleeding will settle with 15-20 minutes of continuous pressure. Applying pressure over the graft for 20 minutes per hour of the first day (at least 6-10 hours) postoperatively will decrease the chance of a collection of blood under the graft and improve the chances of good graft healing.

2. Some *pain* and *discomfort* is expected. Take **Paracetamol** as required. Applying a COOL PACK and PRESSURE helps treat the discomfort.
3. Bruising is normal. This will worsen over the first two days then begin to settle.
4. You should keep your wounds clean and dry. **Keeping your wounds clean and dry will help prevent infection.**

#### **You should leave all dressings intact until your post op review**

Once the sutures are removed from the graft, this area will be left open and then you need to apply paraffin/Vaseline to your graft a few times per day to keep moist. The ointment must be applied gently and the graft not rubbed.

If the graft is a little fragile or slow to heal a second dressing may be required for a further 5-7 days. The donor area for the graft generally have buried sutures only and will dissolve over the next few weeks.

**Avoid itching or rubbing the graft, as this can damage the graft.** It is normal for the graft to look slightly hollow to start with. This will settle with time (generally over a few weeks). **Keeping your wounds dry and clean will help prevent infection.**

*RING THE ROOMS IF YOU NOTICE: increased redness or swelling, drainage of blood, pus or other fluid OR increased pain*

### **MESSAGE**

Massaging your scar is important to achieve the optimal result. It will also give you the best possible scar in the shortest time. You will find that the wound scar will thicken over the first 4 to 6 weeks postoperatively. Massaging will help settle this. The scar is often also red. This is normal. It simply reflects an increased blood supply to the scar during the maturation phase

You can massage the donor scar with vit E or bio oil. For best scar results we advise massage for 12 weeks. Starting 1-2 week after your surgery. **Massage to the graft can only start once completely healed.** You should massage the scar for at least 5 minutes twice a day. In the **first week** of massaging, you should massage in a soft circular motion. In the **second and subsequent weeks** you should massage firmly, applying pressure to the graft and scar. Where possible start applying pressure between the two fingers, such as the rim of the nose, the ear, or the lip.

The aim of firm pressure is to remove the oedema and swelling from the flap and scar. This will help improve the contour of the operated area. It is normal to expect the wound to be tender. Massaging will help the tenderness and sensitivity to settle. Stop massaging the scar when the scar and graft starts to soften and become more supple

Your graft will need a number of months for it to settle. Generally, you will find that the graft will continue to improve over the next 6 to 12 months. **AVOID SUN EXPOSURE** over the first 6 weeks as this can cause unusual pigmentation of the graft.

Some people find that the graft may become raised. This is due to scar contracture under the graft. This should improve with firm pressure and massage. The graft will normally be numb for a number of months. Makeup may be used to cover the graft as soon as it is all healed.

**Please call the rooms to make your follow up appointment with our nurse.** The timeframe for this will be advised by Dr Bayley but is usually 1 week post procedure.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS OR ARE WORRIED ABOUT WOUND INFECTION THEN PLEASE PHONE DR BAYLEY'S ROOMS (07) 3397 9999 OR AFTER HOURS 0402078245**