**SKIN GRAFT **

**CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

 Skin Grafts are delicate and each one is unique. They all have a few things in common:

 -They need to adhere to the wound bed, so compression and protection matter.

 -They do better with ointment.

 -They need blood flow, so avoid smoking and exposure to extreme cold.

**First Week:**

 **-**Following surgery, you should have nothing to do for 48 hours to the graft or the donor site.

- **Some grafts have a BOLSTER DRESSING.** These are a stitched on compression bandage and are yellowish in color, tied with black suture.

If the yellow bandage over the graft becomes soiled, you may gently clean around the edges with water and a Q-Tip and reapply polysporin ointment. No other bandage is required after 48 hours. If the yellow bandage should come off before one week, keep the graft moist with polysporin ointment and please call our office. Feel free to cover the yellow bolster with a gentle dressing if desired. After 48 hours, you may shower and it will be OK if the area receives some incidental clean running water.

 -The skin graft **donor area** also needs some wound care. Please try to leave the taped on white dressing alone for approximately 48 hours. (After that time is up, the area may undergo exposure to shower water.) Then a clean layer of ointment should be gently applied to sutured area and covered with telfa and taped securely into place. This should be done twice a day at minimum until the sutures are gone.

\*\***NO SMOKING OR NICOTINE (GUM/PATCHES) OF ANY FORM.**

**AVOID EXCESSIVE SWEATING, HEAVY LIFTING OR OUTDOOR COLD\*\***

**Second week and after:**

-After we remove the yellow bolster bandage at the one-week visit, the skin graft likely may appear bruised, depressed, or scaly. This is normal and the color and contour will improve over several weeks time. We usually continue ointment and a bandage for another 10-14 days to help the graft. The donor area is usually fine by one week.

-We usually schedule at least one more follow up to be sure the graft is meeting expectations.

-Do not let the graft get direct sunlight. Cover it with a bandage as it will be some time until it can have

Sunscreen or makeup applied to it.