

Conrad J. Tirre, MD, FACS

2535 S. Downing Street, Suite 440 ♦ Denver, CO 80210 ♦
Telephone: (303) 832-3965 ♦ Fax: (303) 957-5990

Skin Graft Care

Bolster Care

At the time of your surgery, Dr. Tirre may apply a dressing called a **Bolster**. A bolster is a type of dressing that is sewn on top of a skin graft. This dressing remains in place until your follow-up visit in the office 5-7 days after surgery.

A bolster holds the skin graft in place to prevent movement of the graft on the underlying tissue, thereby allowing blood supply growth into the graft. The bolster also prevents fluid from accumulating under the graft, such as blood or serum, which could cause the skin graft not to stick or develop circulation. It keeps the skin graft secure and protects it.

- Depending on the location of the bolster and type of graft, FTSG = full thickness skin graft and STSG = split thickness skin graft, you may not be able to shower until your skin graft is adherent with good durable blood supply. This is usually 5-8 days after surgery.
- Keep the bolster clean and dry until seen by Dr. Tirre or his staff.
- **Under no circumstances are you to attempt to remove the bolster on your own!!!**

Skin Graft Donor Site:

What to expect:

The Donor site will be protected with Xeroform (yellow gauze) and then covered Tegaderm (clear occlusive dressing, looks like kitchen cling wrap) For the first few days after your surgery, fluid from your wound will drain through the Xeroform, and even leak out from the Tegaderm. This is normal; just reinforce it with extra gauze so it doesn't leak onto clothing or furniture. The donor site will be painful until it is dry. Take pain medication as directed by your doctor.

-As your skin graft heals, the Xeroform will look crusty. It may itch.

-About 7 to 14 days after the dressing was placed, it will begin to lift off at the edges.

-Once the Xeroform is removed, the wound will be pink with white flaky areas. Don't be alarmed. The pink color will go away in time.

- Bathe or shower daily.
 - Use a separate washcloth to gently wash the Xeroform. Don't scrub it.
 - Don't submerge the Xeroform.
 - Rinse well.
 - Dry yourself and pat the Xeroform dry with a separate towel.
- Check the wound for signs of infection such as redness, swelling, drainage, or a bad smell.
- As the Xeroform begins to lift up and your wound starts to heal, trim off the loose edges of the dressing. Use clean scissors that you have wiped off with an alcohol swab. Stop trimming if it is painful or if it causes bleeding.
- Apply Aquaphor or moisturizing cream to the areas where you have trimmed off the Xeroform.
- Don't cover the Xeroform with other dressings, leave it open to air.