



**MR DANIEL BUNKER**  
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## Patient Information: Skin Grafts

### Skin grafts:

- Skin grafts are skin transplants from one part of the body to another and can be all the layers of the skin (full-thickness) or part of the skin (split-thickness). Full-thickness skin grafts are usually harvested from around the ear, neck, shoulder or groin and the resulting defect closed in a line. Split-thickness skin graft are taken as shaves of skin, leaving a raw area which heals under a dressing leaving a faint rectangular scar.
- To ensure the best chance of skin graft survival, minimise excessive movement as much as practical where the graft has been placed. This is very important for skin grafts around joints or on the legs. In some cases you may have been placed in a splint, given weight-bearing restrictions, or a special vacuum dressing applied.
- Skin grafts are generally checked at 5-7 days and 10-14 days to see how healing is progressing. Dressings will be required during this period as a minimum.
- Donor site wounds are generally checked at 5-7 and 10-14 days. Sutures are generally removed from full-thickness donor sites at the second review. The dressing over a split-thickness graft is left undisturbed and then removed at day 10-14.
- In some cases dressings may be required for longer - this is particularly the cases in areas where healing is generally slower such as the legs and feet, or in elderly patients.
- Initially the newly grafted area can have a significant contour defect - some of this will settle with time.

**Bleeding:** There is occasionally some 'strike-through' present on the dressings - simply removing the dressing exposes the sterile wound to infection. If ooze is noted, attempt direct pressure for 10-15 minutes. If available, something cold (such as ice wrapped in a towel) is best. If the bleeding does not settle, see Concerns.

**Post-operative review:** Appointment details given at time of surgery.

**Analgesia:** Paracetamol 1 gram every 6 hours is suitable for most cases. If required, further analgesia will be prescribed at the time of surgery.

**Infection:** Ensure you take any postoperative antibiotics prescribed. Infection can present as increased pain, redness, ooze or malodour. If you have concerns please call (03) 6388 8118.

**Results:** Pathology results may take up to two weeks to become available.

**Concerns:** If concerned please contact (03) 6388 8118. In an emergency or out of hours please contact the Plastic Surgical Registrar at Launceston General Hospital on (03) 6777 6777 who will contact Mr. Bunker.

*Daniel Bunker*  
SPECIALIST PLASTIC SURGEON