

# HAIR TRANSPLANTATION

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Immediately following surgery you should plan to go home and rest (minimal activity) until the next morning.
2. To help decrease swelling, sleep with your head elevated at a 45 degree angle for 1-3 nights following surgery.
3. DO NOT use any aspirin-containing products or drink alcohol for 3-5 days following surgery.

### WHAT TO DO ABOUT ...

#### BLEEDING:

1. Bleeding may occur the night after surgery or up to a few days after. This almost always stops if you apply firm, steady pressure over the area for 15 minutes (without lifting the gauze to "check" before the time is up). Press firmly but gently so as not to dislodge the surrounding grafts.
2. If you cannot control the bleeding with rest and pressure, you may reach Dr Berg or the resident on-call through the UW switchboard at **206-598-6190**.
3. In the first 1-3 days, a graft may occasionally be knocked or combed out. Do not panic. It is uncommon and even if it happens, it is rare to lose more than a few hair roots this way.

#### PAIN CONTROL:

1. Many people require medication the first 1-2 nights following surgery. You should not have to suffer. The medication should control your discomfort.
2. You will receive a prescription for Tylenol #3, Vicodin or Percocet for pain control. Use these as needed and directed.

#### WOUND CARE:

Immediately on discharge you will be provided with a kit to use as follows:

1. You will be given a spray bottle with sterile saline solution that you should use daily for the next three days after the surgery. Wet 2-3 pieces of gauze with saline solution

and gently apply them on the transplanted area for 30 to 60 minutes twice daily. This will keep the transplanted area moist and will help speed the healing process.

2. For the recipient site (in the back), please apply Polysporin, Bacitracin or Aquaphor ointment a couple of times a day to keep the site from drying out. Using ointment will help reduce crusting.

3. You will be given some sterile gauze to take with you. Use this to apply gentle pressure to any areas which may lightly bleed the day of the surgery or in the next few days. If the bleeding is from the donor area, lift the hair before applying pressure to avoid the hair getting matted down.

4. We will speak by phone the next day to see if you need to be seen (many patients do not).

#### SWELLING:

1. Swelling may occur (especially after your first transplant), usually on the forehead and usually beginning around day 2-4 following surgery. This will not leave any permanent problems. As gravity works, the swelling may descend to the eyelids. Rarely black eyes may occur. This is uncommon, and though unsightly will not leave any permanent mark.

2. Swelling can be reduced by sleeping with your head elevated at 45 degrees for 1-3 nights following surgery using a recliner or pillows.

#### INFECTION:

1. Infection is rare. Avoid exposure to dirt in the air at work or at play for 2 weeks following surgery. Do not touch the donor area or the transplanted grafts except with clean hands to reduce the chance of an infection. Report any increasing tenderness or redness and swelling around the surgical site.

#### EXERCISE & WORK :

1. Refrain from heavy work or sports for 1 week.

2. Refrain from weight lifting or heavy lifting or swimming in chlorinated water for 10-14 days.

3. Some people return to light work the day following surgery, although most people prefer to take at least 2-3 days off. Because of the possibility of swelling and some crusting following surgery, some people prefer to take one week off following surgery. This is especially true after your first procedure when everything is new for you. Crusting will be more visible if you have little hair to begin with. Crusts usually fall off 7-

10 days following surgery.

### HAIR WASHING & HAIR CARE

1. Beginning on the day after surgery, you may begin to wash your hair gently in the shower. Try not to let the water beat directly onto the recipient area where the grafts are for the first 4-5 days after surgery. You may want to have a cup in the shower to help rinse the graft sites. Beginning 2-3 days after surgery you can gently touch the grafts with the fingertips while washing in the shower. Avoid catching the grafts with your fingernails.
2. Hairspray and mousse can be used one week after the transplant but should be washed off daily.
3. When combing, do so carefully to avoid dislodging the grafts.
4. Try to avoid hair dryers for 1-2 weeks, especially the hot ones.
5. Hair coloring, perming or cutting can be done once all the crusts have fallen off.

### SUTURES:

1. Sutures will be removed from the donor area usually 14 days following the surgery.

### CRUSTING:

1. Crusts will usually fall off in 7 – 10 days though this can last longer.
2. Applying ointment (Aquaphor or Bacitracin or Polysporin) can be done (though not required) to try and soften the crusts if they are prominent. These are greasy, however, and you can consider using K-Y gel (water-soluble) instead.

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