



Moisturizing Your Skin Graft and Skin Graft Donor Site

Information for Plastic Surgery patients

This handout for Plastic Surgery patients at Harborview Medical Center explains how to apply moisturizer to a skin graft and skin graft donor site.

Skin grafts and skin graft donor sites must be moisturized to lessen dryness, cracking, and itching. You can start putting moisturizer on your skin graft or donor site after it is fully healed.

Healed grafts and donor sites are pink and dry, and do not have any drainage. If you are unsure if your graft or donor site is healed and ready for moisturizer, ask your doctor.

Choosing a Moisturizer

- Avoid moisturizers that have scents and colors added.
- Use a moisturizer that keeps your skin soft and non-flaky.
- The brand of moisturizer does not matter.
- Keep in mind that ointments work better than creams and lotions.
- You might need to try a few products to find one that works well with your skin.



You might need to try a few products to find one that works best for you.

Examples

Here are some examples of ointments, lotions, and creams:

Ointments

- Aquaphor
- Bag Balm
- Vaseline
- Local store brand
- Beta Glucan

Lotions and Creams

- Cocoa butter
- Cetaphil
- Eucerin
- Keri
- Local store brand

You can also use vegetable oil or olive oil as an ointment.

How to Apply Moisturizer

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Apply the moisturizer as often as needed to keep your skin soft and stop it from flaking. This may be 1 time a day or a few times a day, depending on your skin.
- Always use moisturizer after you take a bath or a shower. This helps lock in the moisture after bathing.
- If your skin looks greasy or waxy, use less moisturizer.
- When you apply moisturizer, it is also a good time to massage your scars and grafts.
- Stop using your moisturizer if a rash appears. Call the clinic to find out what to do.

Who to Call

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, call the Burn/Plastic Surgery Clinic at 206.744.5735. The clinic answers calls weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Urgent Needs

If you have an urgent care need after hours or on a weekend or holiday, call the Community Care Line nurse at 206.744.2500.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call one of the numbers below if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., call the Burn/Plastic Surgery Clinic: 206.744.5735

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call the 24-hour nurse at the Community Care Line: 206.744.2500