**SKIN GRAFT WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. After surgery, go home and take it easy. Do not do any heavy lifting, exertion, bending, straining, or exercising until your follow up appointment with the doctor or until your doctor allows it.
2. Do not drink any alcoholic beverages, take any medications containing aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil, Aleve, Naprosyn), or Vitamin E for the next 24-48 hours. If you require medicine to control your pain, take only Tylenol or the medication prescribed by your physician.
3. **DO NOT SMOKE!** Smoking causes wound healing problems by restricting blood flow to the treated area which can cause skin death. It is very important that you do not smoke for at least 2 weeks following your procedure.
4. **\*\*\*\*It is important to** **leave all dressings dry and intact**. This means you may **NOT** get the dressings wet or remove the dressings until your office visit in 5-7 days. You may carefully wash around the dressing as needed.
5. To minimize swelling, keep the treated area elevated for the first two days following your procedure.
6. Do not sleep on the side of the body with the wound.
7. Do not bend over with your head lower than your heart level. Bend at the knees to stoop down. Be careful not to lift anything heavy or do anything to cause strain on the graft.
8. It is perfectly normal to have bruising or discoloration around the surgery site, especially around the eyes. Do not be alarmed by this, it will eventually fade and return to normal color.

You will have an in-office bandage change after 5-7 days. After this, you will need to take care of your graft and donor site daily. Follow **sutured wound instructions** for both sites.

During the healing process you will notice a number of changes. All wounds develop a small surrounding halo of redness, which means healing is occurring. Severe itching with extensive redness may indicate sensitivity to the ointment used to dress the wound or in most cases a reaction to the bandage tape. You should call the office if this develops.

Swelling and/or discoloration around your surgical site is not uncommon, particularly when performed around the eye. You may use an ice pack (on for 10- 20 minutes), wrapped in a wash cloth every 1-2 hours to help minimize bruising and swelling.

If bleeding occurs hold firm pressure to the site for 20 full minutes without releasing pressure or checking on the site. If the bleeding persists after 2 twenty minute sessions of holding pressure, call the office.

You may experience a sensation of tightness as your wound(s) heal(s). This is normal and will gradually subside. Frequently, the surgery involves nerves and may take up to a year before feeling returns to normal. Rarely will the area remain numb permanently.

Your healed wound may be sensitive to temperature changes (such as cold air). This sensitivity improves with time, but if you are having a lot of discomfort, try to avoid temperature extremes.

Patients frequently experience itching after their wounds appear to have healed because of the continued healing that is occurring under the skin. Plain Vaseline may help relieve the itching.

\***In Case of Emergency\* Please call the office at 781-431-7733**