

Patient Information Leaflet

Skin Flap and Skin Graft Surgery

Why have I been referred for this treatment?

You have a skin lesion that requires surgical removal. This may involve either a skin flap or a skin graft, depending on the size of the lesion.

How is the procedure carried out?

For most surgeries, the area is removed, and the wound is stitched closed in a straight line. However, if a larger area of skin must be removed, a skin flap or skin graft may be needed. The procedure is typically done under local anaesthetic, meaning you will remain awake, but the area will be numbed.

What does a local anaesthetic involve?

A local anaesthetic involves several small injections to numb the skin around the lesion. You might feel a prick and a short sting, but the area will be pain-free during the operation.

What is a skin flap?

A skin flap is used to repair a larger wound by moving a piece of skin from a nearby area. This skin remains partially attached to its original site and blood supply, which helps it heal. The skin flap is repositioned over the wound and stitched in place. Flap repairs are often used where a better cosmetic result is important, such as around the eye or nose.

What is a skin graft?

A skin graft involves taking a thin piece of skin from another part of your body (the 'donor site') and placing it over the wound. The donor site is typically an area like behind the ear, the neck, or the inside of your arm. The skin is either stitched back together or left to heal naturally. The area where the graft is placed will be delicate and may have a dressing or sponge stitched over it to ensure proper healing. It's important to protect the graft from damage while it heals.

What are the risks?

In some cases, patients may develop an infection in the wound, requiring antibiotics, which may slow healing and require regular dressing changes.

Will I need to take extra care after surgery?

Yes. Rest is essential for at least 48 hours after surgery. Avoid activities like shopping, cycling, dog walking, or exercise, as they can raise your blood pressure and cause bleeding. If the surgery is on your head or face, avoid bending and use two pillows when sleeping for a couple of nights. For leg operations, keep your leg elevated to promote healing.

What should I take if I have pain?

We recommend taking paracetamol for pain relief. Avoid aspirin, as it can increase the risk of bleeding. If you are prescribed aspirin for another condition, check with your consultant when you can resume taking it.

What should I do if the wound starts to bleed?

Some oozing is normal, but if there is bleeding, apply constant pressure with a clean cloth for 15–20 minutes. If the bleeding doesn't stop, visit your nearest Accident and Emergency department.

Who will remove my stitches or dressings?

After surgery, you will return to ID Medical Minor Surgery Service at Widcombe Surgery a week later, where a Nurse will check your wound and remove any stitches.

What will the area look like?

After a skin flap, the skin may initially be raised but will eventually settle and become a fine white line. After a skin graft, the area may be pink and appear sunken. Over time, the skin will improve, though a dent may remain. Make-up can be applied once the wound is dry.

Long-term appearance

The appearance of the skin flap or graft will continue to improve over 18 months. Gently massaging a moisturiser, such as E45 or Vaseline, into the area twice daily for 2–3 months may help with healing.

When will I know if the skin lesion has been completely removed?

It takes about 4–5 weeks to receive the results from the surgery. You will either have a follow-up appointment or receive an Email or SMS with your results. If the lesion was not fully removed, further surgery may be required to take away any remaining tissue.

Contact Information:

Telephone: 01225 418 888

Email: MOService@id-medical.com

Office Hours: 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday



**If you have any concerns, please contact us,
or on weekends, your GP out-of-hours service.**