

## **How to Care for your Hair Transplant Grafts**

You have invested time and money in your grafts. Please follow these instructions carefully to ensure optimum results.

**Please contact us first if possible if you have any urgent worries or problems.** In an emergency, we do carry mobile phones and have an answering machine but if you feel you need medical assistance immediately, then please seek advice from your local GP or casualty department. However, most problems are straightforward and part of the normal healing process. Please 'phone us during working hours on **01789 414203** and there will be staff who can help you.

### **Day of Procedure.**

You may wear a baseball cap or similar to go home in but **Not** a tight fitting or woolly hat. We will show you how to put it on but once it is in place, **do not take it off again or keep adjusting it**, as your scalp will still be numb from the local anaesthetic and it is very easy initially to dislodge or damage grafts without realising it. When you get home, we recommend that you remove the cap, slowly and carefully, whilst watching in the mirror.

You may need to take paracetamol or ibuprofen for the first 24-48 hours. Once the local anaesthetic has worn off, your donor site is likely to feel tight and sore. You will benefit from taking the painkillers regularly, every four to six hours, for the first 24 hours or so, as this will reduce the discomfort to a minimum. You should not use drink alcohol for the first 24 hours as this "thins the blood" and may cause minor bleeding. After the procedure, you may experience slight spotting of blood from the donor site but this is not unusual and you should simply press firmly on the area for 5 minutes with the clean swabs provided.

Office Suite 2, Shrieves Walk, 39 Sheep Street, Street, Stratford-upon-Avon,  
Warwickshire CV37 6GJ

Registered company Westminster (Services) Ltd company number 8359024

Tel: 01789 414203

[www.westminsterclinic.co.uk](http://www.westminsterclinic.co.uk)

### **Days 1 - 2**

Day One is the first morning after the procedure (i.e. approx 15 -20 hours after it is finished).

Your donor site will be a little sore. Avoid scratching or picking the crusting on your scalp. You will be given a small spray bottle of saline and you should lightly spray the crusts hourly. It keeps them moist and helps with any irritating itching. You may get some forehead or eyebrow swelling over the next few days. This is normal and is to be expected. This can be reduced by “taking it easy.” You should lie back rather than sit upright if reading or watching TV as this will help any swelling to dissipate away from your face.

### **Day 3**

You can now get your hair wet. Stand under a gentle, lukewarm shower for five minutes, letting the water soak the crusts but do not scratch or use shampoo just yet. Leave your hair to dry naturally, using your fingers to style it, dabbing gently with a soft towel. **DO NOT RUB!** You can do this twice or even three times a day for 10 minutes a time. Any forehead swelling will peak now and disappear over the next few days.

### **Day 4**

This is the first day you can wash your head with shampoo. Again, soak your hair for at least five minutes then put some shampoo in the palm of your hand and then gently put this on the top of your head, letting the lather run over your head and slowly moving it over the whole head. Leave for a minute and wash off, as above.

### **Days 5 – 10**

You should now be shampooing daily with a mild shampoo such as Neutrogena. You should apply the shampoo to the back or sides of the head, away from your grafts and gently work into a lather. You should then gently allow the soapy suds to run onto the grafts. Do not be tempted to pick at the crusts but don't be surprised if some of the graft hairs come away with the loose crusts. This is perfectly normal. This should be carried out daily as this helps to speed up the healing process.

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### **Days 9-11 - Removal of Stitches**

You will be told what type of stitch has been used. We can use both absorbable and non-absorbable stitches. However, stitches are best removed if possible, because the scar will heal better, quicker and you'll get back to normal faster, but also because the absorption process causes itching.

The stitch type is a simple continuous spiral "running stitch", similar to a "spring." Each visible loop of stitch should be cut first, and then the short lengths removed. **Do Not** attempt to cut one end and pull through!! You should though, cut each knot at each end.

### **Days 11-14**

The donor area should now be healing fast. Many patients find the donor site more comfortable once the stitches are removed. You should avoid heavy lifting or exercise until at least two weeks is up and only exercise fairly gently for the first four weeks.

### **Day 14 – Six Months**

Once your stitches have gone and the donor area feels comfortable then it is a good time to have a haircut but not too short to begin with i.e. not less than electric clipper setting "4". Over the next six months, the individual hairs will start growing through, getting longer each day. It is important to realise that the hair doesn't appear "all at once" but is a gradual, random process, maximum results are achieved by 24 months. Once all the hair has grown to a reasonable length you can treat your hair normally - washing, drying, dyeing, cutting etc.

**It is normal not to see any growth at all before three months** and it often takes six to nine months before thick growth comes through. It is also common for the transplants to initially grow for a few weeks, then shedding later at 4 weeks, before regrowing.

## **Review**

We would like you to return for review at 12 months to check on growth, results and satisfaction. We can compare your before and after photos and discuss any future hair restoration requirements. This review is mandatory but if it is difficult for you to get to see us, then please keep us informed by telephone or post or email photos over.

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