



## **Hair Transplant Post-Operative Instructions**

**Suture/Staple Removal:** Please call the office to schedule this appointment.

**1 Month Follow-up:** Please call the office to schedule this appointment.

Hair transplant surgery is a delicate procedure in which its optimal outcome is based on both the hair restoration staff as well as the patient's adherence to these post-operative instructions. Our ultimate goal is that you are more than satisfied with the care you receive, and we encourage you to contact us with any problems or questions.

### **PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS**

- 1. Antibiotics:** Please take your antibiotics as prescribed for 5 days. This is to prevent a skin infection that you may incur. If you develop any allergy to the medication, please stop the medication and call our office.
- 2. Narcotic Pain Medication:** If you were prescribed Percocet, take as prescribed for pain for the first 3 days. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE PAIN.** After 3 days you make take Extra Strength Tylenol during the day as directed and save the narcotic pain medication for bedtime. Alcohol should not be consumed while taking this medication. In addition, narcotic pain medication may cause drowsiness; therefore driving under the influence of narcotics is not recommended. This medication should be taken with food and may cause constipation. As a result, it is recommended that you purchase an over-the-counter stool softener such as Colace or Senokot-S from your local pharmacy.
- 3. Prednisone:** Starting the morning of surgery, take one tablet, once a day for 5 days. This medication may help prevent swelling and should be taken with a glass of water and food. Possible side effects include jitteriness, excitability and/or lower extremity swelling.

### **CONTACT NUMBERS**

If you have any problems or questions, please call the office at 508-756-4247.

If you are having a medical emergency: Call 911 and/or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

If for any reason you require emergency room attention, please notify our office as soon as possible. If it is after hours, please contact or **Dr. Heinis at 978-434-7073.**

## **SURGERY TIMELINE**

### **FIRST NIGHT OF SURGERY**

**Pain:** Generally, most of the discomfort that you will feel will arise from the tightness in your scalp if you underwent an FUT procedure (the strip method). The tightness and/or tenderness will be present both in the transplanted area as well as in the area where the donor grafts were taken. Your symptoms will gradually improve over a few days to weeks. Patient's who have undergone the FUE procedure will have some soreness and discomfort along the donor area for a few days. If you have been provided with prescription pain medication. Please take as directed. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE PAIN.** As your pain lessens, begin taking extra strength Tylenol. Take 500mg every 4 hours as needed. If you take the prescription pain reliever, **DO NOT** take Tylenol because the prescription pain reliever already contains Tylenol. As of 2011, the FDA recommends not exceeding 3,000mg of Tylenol in a 24-hour period.

**Bleeding:** It is normal to slightly bleed or ooze overnight. To protect the bed linens, we provide you with paper pillowcases. If slight bleeding occurs along the donor area, apply firm pressure with the palm of your hand using gauze. If one or more grafts start to bleed, apply firm pressure with gauze moistened with tap water. If bleeding does not stop with firm pressure for 20 minutes, please call the physician, even if after hours.

**Redness:** In most patients, redness over the donor scar and recipient area fades in a few weeks; however, on rare occasions there have been some patients that will hold redness in the recipient area for up to 8 weeks or more.

**Sleeping:** It is important to sleep in a semi-sitting position to prevent and/or minimize post-operative swelling. Either use 3-4 pillows or a recliner (45 degrees from the waist up) for the first 3-4 nights. As stated above, paper pillowcases will be provided for you to take home. Facial fullness, headache and disrupted sleep are very normal postoperative symptoms and will decrease as the healing process occurs. Strenuous activity including bending, lifting or straining after hair restoration surgery is not recommended after the transplantation.

**Swelling:** Swelling usually begins at the hairline and then, from gravity, it gradually moves down the forehead and settles into the bridge of the nose and around the eyes and cheeks. On rare occasions, this may lead to black eyes. Beginning the evening of surgery, and for the next 3-4 days, apply ice to your forehead (**not the grafted area**) for 15-20 minutes AT LEAST 4 times daily while awake. Realizing that swelling may not appear for 3-4 days, you should continue to ice even if you don't see any swelling. This is a preventative measure. As stated above, to reduce swelling, it is important to sleep in a semi-sitting position for the first 3-4 days. However, if swelling does occur, the swelling will drain down the face for approximately 3-4 days. At this point, icing or other preventative measures will no longer be effective. You may also apply ice to your donor area (back of the scalp) if it is comforting. This may reduce swelling and help relieve some tenderness.

## Hair Cleaning and Management:

### **SPRAY**

For optimal results, spray the solution on the recipient sites, spray every half-hour while awake for the first two days. You do not need to wake up in the middle of the night to spray your sites. Then continue to spray 3-4 times daily until the bottle is empty. After spraying, it may appear as if it is bleeding. This excess is a combination of dried blood with the spray solution. You may wipe the excess fluid that drips down, but do not touch the grafts.

### **SHAMPOOING**

Regular washing of your hair is extremely important after the surgery. One would think that this would disturb the grafts, however if done properly, the chance of dislodging the grafts is minimal. The shampooing helps remove dirt, blood and oil, and will gently dislodge the crusts or scabs that form over the recipient sites. These crusts should normally be gone within a few days to a week at the most.

On the evening following your procedure, you will begin washing your hair once or twice daily standing upright in the shower, but do not use the showerhead. Direct pressure is too strong for your grafts at this time. Instead, bring a plastic cup or bowl into the shower and wet your hair by gently pouring warm water over your head until your hair is saturated. Lather a small amount of Cetaphil onto a washcloth or on your fingers. Wash the grafts gently with the washcloth or fingertips (not fingernails) using a slight patting motion (let the shampoo sit for 1-2 minutes). Follow this by then shampooing with the DiNuovo Shampoo using the same steps as with the Cetaphil, this will be for the first 3 days. After the 4<sup>th</sup> day, use your fingertips on the grafts with a light circular motion and increase the pressure each day. After 7 days you should be shampooing normally, including receiving direct pressure from the showerhead. Do not use conditioner until all of the scabs have fallen off. Air dry or gently pat hair dry with a towel. Do not rub grafts to dry them. If desired, a blow dryer on a cool or low setting can be used after 24 hours to dry the grafted area. Remember, do not pick or scratch. If you cause the area to bleed, you are being too aggressive!

### **DAYS 2 - 5**

Shampoo the hair once every morning using the cup method described above. Continue spraying the grafted area with the hydrating mist 3-4 times throughout the day while awake.

### **DAYS 6 - 8**

Shampoo hair once in the morning, but discontinue the cup method and begin to shampoo in your normal fashion at day 7. On day 6, you may begin using conditioner as described above, as long as most of your scabs have fallen off. You may continue to use the shampoo and conditioner until they are empty. After you have finished the products, we recommend using Tricomin shampoo, conditioner and follicle therapy spray, which are

proven to reinforce the roots and improve hair structure, restore balance and protect and maintain hair.

## **DAY 10**

On day 10 begin using the foam brush. Use the bristle side and apply moderate pressure. The brush should only be used for 3 days maximum and then discarded. This will help remove left over scabs and start to loosen the small hair-shafts. The greater majority should start to fall out at 4 weeks. The second brush should be used 1 month post-op for a maximum of 3 days and discarded.

### Donor Scar Care:

Keep area clean and dry for the first 24 hours. You may rinse the donor scar area with direct pressure from the showerhead. Avoid exposing scars to direct sunlight for at least 6 months. Always use sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection (SPF 30+).

### Donor Scar Care For FUT Procedure:

1. Do not soak your donor wound in the tub while sutures or staples are in place.
2. Cleanse suture lines with warm water and either a washcloth or Q-tips. Dip the Q-tip or washcloth in the warm water and gently roll it across the suture line to remove dried blood. You will need several Q-tips each time you do this.
3. If you so choose, after you have had your sutures or staples removed, you may apply Mederma gel (over-the-counter), once in the mornings, to your incision line twice daily for 60-90 days. Mederma is used for the prevention and management of excessive and abnormal scar formation, such as hypertrophic (red, raised) scars and keloids.

Please remember that it takes between 6 to 12 months for the donor scar to mature. It may get red and lumpy before it begins to flatten and become lighter in color. Not until it is white and flat is it mature, so please be patient.

## **1-14 DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY**

On the second day, small scabs the size of a pinhead surrounding the transplanted hair follicle will sometimes be visible. They may look like little grains of sand. Every patient is different, but in general the scabs and the scalp redness goes away anywhere between a few days to around 2 weeks. When the scabs fall off, the short hairs that were implanted will generally fall out too. **This is to be expected.** The follicles are alive and healthy under the skin and new hairs will begin to grow in about 3-4 months. Any follicles that did not fall off with the scabs will grow for 3-6 weeks and generally shed. If crusts are not going away by day 7-10, place a warm, wet compress on the scalp for 10 minutes prior to showering. Repeat this until crusts are gone. You may notice that your scabs turn white. This is because they have become waterlogged. Do not pick or scratch the scabs, as doing so can cause infection and endanger the survival of the grafts. If scabbing persists beyond 14 days, you may not be shampooing vigorously enough. *It is important to note that the transplanted hair will be fully embedded after day 10.*

### **14 DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY**

At 14 days you will have an appointment to remove your sutures or staples, if you underwent the FUT procedure. Please call the office to schedule this appointment. Your primary care physician can also remove the sutures or staples. You may want to take one or two extra-strength Tylenol one hour prior to your office visit to alleviate any slight discomfort that you may experience from the removal process. After your staples or sutures have been removed, wash your hair daily in the shower until all the crusts have fallen off. We have provided a cleaning brush to use starting at day 10 (see above).

**If you had an FUE procedure we would like you to return at 4 weeks for a follow up visit.**

**If you had a FUT procedure you should return at one month for follow up (2 weeks after the staples were removed).**

### **3-8 WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY**

The transplanted hair begins to shed around 3-8 weeks following the procedure. This process, Anagen Effluvium, is perfectly normal and to be expected for 90% of the grafts, as these transplanted hair follicles are now in the resting phase of growth and are shed. After the 3rd to 6th month the lost grafts start to re-grow, initially as finer hairs and gain length and thickness as their growth continues.

It is important to return for your 30-day follow up visit so that we may thoroughly inspect your scalp for any retained scabs that can slow the healing process. We do offer a thorough scalp cleansing for a fee. At the end of 1 month, the hair follicles enter a resting phase and your scalp will appear very similar to how it looked prior to the procedure.

### **3-4 MONTHS FOLLOWING SURGERY**

This time period is called the active growth stage. When the transplanted hair first appears, it is immature, fine, thin, and light in color. In addition, some or all of the hair that might have shed begins to grow back.

### **6 -9 MONTHS FOLLOWING SURGERY**

You can expect to see considerable new growth. The new hair will be approximately two to three inches in length and the hair shaft will begin to thicken. Also, the incision in the donor area is healed, if you underwent an FUT procedure.

### **12-24 MONTHS FOLLOWING SURGERY**

The visual result continues to improve for up to 18 months-24 months and it is only after 18 months-24months that the final aesthetic is typically achieved.

## **POST-OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES**

### **ATTIRE AFTER SURGERY**

Wear a button down or zip up shirt for 5 days after surgery. Wearing a shirt you have to pull down over your head could potentially dislodge the new grafts. If wearing a baseball cap, carefully place the bill of the hat on your forehead, and then pull back down. To remove your hat, carefully lift the back of the hat up and off first. Remember to wear loose fitting hats. Hats are not necessary unless you are in direct sunlight. In this case, a hat should be worn to prevent sunburn of the grafts.

### **RETURN TO WORK**

If you have a desk job, you may return to work the next day, assuming you are able to work with mild donor area discomfort. If your job requires you to lift objects greater than 15 pounds or if you are relatively active, it is recommended that you return to work after 7 days.

### **EXERCISE AND ACTIVITY**

It is important that you avoid exercise, activities and sports for 7 days. Too much activity could cause swelling, bleeding and loss of grafts. After 7 days you may resume MILD activities (approximately 50% of normal exercise routine), continuing to avoid heavy activity such as running and heavy weight lifting for an additional 7 days. Please refrain from sexual activity for 3 days following your procedure. Also, remember to bend at the knees instead of the waist when picking up objects and tying shoes. Be careful not to bump your head. Avoid the use of a sauna or steam room until after the sutures or staples are removed. Please remember to wash your hair right after exercising for the first 2 weeks, to prevent build up of oil on and around your grafts.

### **HAIR CARE**

Do not comb your hair until after you have washed your hair for the first time and your hair is wet. Make sure not to touch the grafts themselves when combing your hair. Limit the use of all hair care products until all of the scabs and crusts are gone, but you may use products after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. You may get a haircut once all of the scabs and crusts are gone *and* the sutures or staples are out. Hair coloring should be taken care of no later than 3 days prior to surgery. If not, you must wait 4 weeks after surgery to undergo hair coloring. You may wear a bicycle or motorcycle helmet 7 days after surgery.

### **SWIMMING AND SUN**

Avoid swimming in the ocean for 3 days. Avoid swimming in a pool until your scabs have fallen off. Try to avoid any direct sun exposure on the grafted area for the first 4 weeks. In order to protect your skin, you can begin wearing sunscreen (SPF 30+) 2 weeks after your procedure. Wear a hat when you are going to be outside. A sunburn may result in discoloration of the area.

### **ALCOHOL**

DO NOT drink alcohol for the first 3 days after surgery OR for as long as you're on the pain medication. Alcohol thins the blood and may cause bleeding. The pain medication

we provide cannot be combined with alcohol.

### **CIGARETTE SMOKING**

It has been proven that cigarette smoking impairs wound healing. To ensure the best healing and survival of the transplanted hair we suggest that you discontinue smoking for at least one month prior to your surgery and not to resume smoking for at least two weeks after your surgery.

### **CAMOUFLAGE**

You may have a pink tinge in the recipient area for up to 3 months, especially if you are light skinned. If you have an important event you must attend, following your surgery, you can camouflage the recipient area grafts by using any oil-free, water-based, make-up foundation available. Whichever cover-up method you use, shampoo and remove it as soon as possible after the event. Do not use cosmetic camouflage agents (such as Toppik) for at least 2-3 days following your procedure.

### **HAIRPIECES**

You may resume using your hairpiece 3 days after surgery provided that you do not apply tape or clip the hairpiece to the newly grafted area. For the first 2 weeks after that point, you should limit wearing a hairpiece to a maximum of 12 hours per day. This is to prevent infection or interfere with healing.

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?**

### **HAIR SHEDDING (Shock Loss)**

Shock loss (Telogen Effluvium) is a normal physiological process, occurring in 10-20% of patients, in which there is temporary or permanent shedding of *non-transplanted* hair close to the tiny recipient incisions OR around the donor area (back of the scalp) in response to the stress of the surgical procedure itself. It usually begins within the first 3 months after the procedure. Please don't be alarmed. Hair that goes into shock and doesn't return is hair that was inevitably on its way out anyway and wasn't strong enough to return. More often than not the hair that has gone into shock will grow back after 3-4 months (the duration of the telogen phase).

### **ITCHING**

You may experience some itching either in the transplanted area or in the sutured area (if you had the FUT procedure) following your procedure. Itching is part of the healing process and should not be a cause for concern. Causes include dryness or as a result of new hairs growing in. If the itching is bothersome to you, you may purchase over-the-counter Hydrocortisone 1% Ointment or Hydrocortisone 1% with Aloe (Aloe Cort Cream) and apply to affected area up to four times daily. It is extremely important to remember **NOT TO SCRATCH THE SCALP** as this may dislodge grafts.

## **NUMBNESS**

Some numbness at the suture line (if you underwent the FUT procedure) and at the graft sites most likely will occur. This is the result of cutting small nerve endings in the skin during the course of harvesting the donor grafts and creating the recipient sites. This is normal and will begin to resolve in 6 to 8 weeks. Some patients may notice small areas that remain numb for up to 1 year.

Some patients may notice some tingling or enhanced sensibility from the scalp from time to time as these nerves are healing and growing back.

## **LOST OR DISLODGED GRAFTS**

Please note that when hairs are shed in the first few weeks, there may be a crust at the top and a bulb at the bottom. Remember the bulb is not the root (the growth part of the hair follicle). It is normal for the hair, bulb and associated crust to be shed and this does not represent a lost graft. If a graft is actually lost (something that may occur the first few days following the procedure and is not uncommon) there will be bleeding at the site of the lost graft. Therefore, if you don't see any bleeding, don't be concerned.

## **INGROWN HAIRS**

Ingrown hairs are pimple-like lesions that can occur within the first few months of hair transplantation. Occasionally, a patient may develop this as the new hair is beginning to grow through the surface. If this happens, apply a warm, moist cloth to the area for 10 minutes, three times a day. If after 3-5 days there is no relief please contact the office, as you may need to be seen to have the ingrown hair removed by our staff. In addition, if at any point the area becomes reddened, swollen, tender, or inflamed, contact the office, as this may be folliculitis (read below).

## **FOLLICULITIS**

Folliculitis means an inflammation or infection of the hair follicles of the skin. They are pimple-like scalp lesions that can typically be seen after hair transplant surgery in both the implanted and donor wound areas in the few weeks to one month after hair transplant. It is usually caused by blockage of hair or in the exit pores of the oil glands in the skin. As a result of the blockage, skin oil cannot be emptied to the skin surface and instead begins accumulating underneath the skin surface. The result is red or white head-like pimples around one or more follicular units. Folliculitis may present with itching, mild pain, tenderness and discharge. Most cases of folliculitis are mild and clear spontaneously in 7-10 days without requiring antibiotics. More extensive types may require antibiotics. Folliculitis will not affect your outcome, however it is extremely important to arrive to your 30-day follow up appointment so our staff can thoroughly inspect your scalp.

## **HAIR TEXTURE**

Infrequently, there is some textural change in the transplanted hair. It may become curlier than it was, or even somewhat wiry; often the luster of the hair is also diminished if this altered texture occurs. This phenomenon is temporary, and resolves with the normal growth cycles of the hair often in 12 to 18 months

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

Growth will not be as thick as you or I would want. A person's head has around 100,000 hairs before it begins to lose hair. Typically, even with multiple procedures, we are only able to transplant between 12,000-18,000 hairs. As discussed in our consultation, Propecia (or Finasteride) will slow thinning of hair in men and increase coverage of the scalp by growing new hair and enlarging existing hairs. Propecia (or Finasteride) in conjunction with hair transplantation will give you the best outcome.

### Hair Growth Timeline

Post-Operative Care	Recipient Site Care	Donor Site Care
24 Hours following surgery	Patients are instructed to wash their hair gently, but thoroughly, so that the scalp is free of any blood.	Expect some soreness, tightness and possibly some numbness. There will be some oozing in the donor area.
Days 2-3	Moderate redness and scabs will be present. Some swelling may appear on the forehead.	Soreness begins to improve.
Days 4-6	If there is significant swelling, it may settle across the bridge of the nose and around the eyes and cheeks.	In the donor area only, any residual crusting can be removed with directly running shower water.
End of Week 1	Swelling usually has subsided. Redness is faint or absent. Scabs begin to flake off.	Soreness is generally gone. With IGT, the donor area is usually healed.
Day 10	Grafts are firmly in place. Any residual crusting may be gently scrubbed off.	Patient seen for suture or staple removal at 10-14 days if patient underwent the FUT procedure.
End of Week 2 to Week 3	Scabs are gone. The transplanted hair begins to be shed. Patients may return to normal shampooing, brushing and combing and may get haircuts.	Discomfort and scab is gone. Numbness is common
End of Month 1 to Month 2	The follicles enter a resting phase. You will look very much like you did before the procedure. Patients may dye their hair. Ingrown hairs may be noted.	
Months 3-4	The newly transplanted hair starts to grow, initially as very fine hair. Some or all of the original hair that was shed begins to grow back.	

Months 6-9	Hair is groomable, but it continues to grow and thicken. Slight textural changes in hair are occasionally present.	
Months 12-24	The final appearance of the hair transplants can begin to be appreciated.	<b>Please call the office between 12-15 months to schedule a follow-up appointment</b>