



FUT/STRIP Post Operative Instructions
Dr. Woessner

Tonight: Eat a small good meal when you get home and take one or two of the prescribed pain pills when you need to. Place an ice pack on the stitched area in the back for about 15-20 minutes. Do this 3 or 4 times tonight. Any discomfort should be easily controlled and should be much better by morning.

Sleeping: You may lie on your back or sit up, but not on your stomach or face down. Use a soft pillow if you have grafts in the crown.

Tomorrow: Unless you were specifically advised to return for wash-up, you may carefully unwrap and remove the headband dressing as directed in the morning. Dr Woessner will call you in the morning. If there is any resistance when removing the bandages stop immediately, you can place a wet wash cloth on top of the bandage to loosen it up prior to removal. You may gently shampoo the hair as directed, being careful to only pat the area with lathered shampoo without rubbing. To rinse, simply pour warm water from a cup. DO NOT expose grafted area to direct pressurized water. Use a shampoo with conditioner. Shampoo twice daily. This facilitates early scab removal. Apply ice for 10 minutes intermittently to forehead just above the eyebrows. Do not apply ice to graft area. Repeat icing four times daily for 3 days after surgery.

Activity: Avoid any strenuous exertion for the next week. No heavy lifting, running, weight lifting, etc. during this time. Normal daily activities are fine, after first 48 hours.

Things to Avoid: Do not take any aspirin, ibuprofen, or other anti-inflammatory medication for at least 3 days. (Tylenol is OK) Also, avoid Vitamin E for 3 days. Vitamin C and other vitamins are OK to take right away in the recommend daily doses. Avoid sexual intercourse for 2 days. Do Not risk sunburn to the top of head, especially during the first 3 weeks.

Swelling: Forehead swelling is normal and expected after surgery in the facial area. It can range from mild puffiness in the mid-forehead, to more severe swelling that may drift below the eyes. On occasion, a small amount of bruising may also be present. Rest assured that the degree of swelling has no effect on the outcome and is in no way dangerous. It generally comes and goes quickly, usually subsiding within 48 ours of appearance. You can reduce swelling by intermittent use of ice packs on the forehead; do not place ice on the grafts. You may also gently massage the swollen areas to spread the swelling out.

Scabs: The crusty scabs will heal quickly. After three days, begin applying Minoxidil to the crusts every morning and before bedtime. Most will be gone in as little as 5 days and not more than 10 days. Do NOT pick or scratch at the crusts. This could dislodge grafts. After 8 days you can allow the water from your shower to directly hit the top of your head. If there are still adherent scabs on the hairs after 8 days, you may begin to gently rub the area while shampooing. Do not be concerned if you see the small whisker hairs come off with the scabs. This is normal. In fact, sometimes the whisker hairs will grow for several days or weeks and then fall out. Again, this is a normal process and a new hair will grow in time. Persistent redness of the skin is normal for a few weeks or more. After the scabs are off, it is OK to mask the redness with make-up or powder if needed. Often simply styling of adjacent hair will cover the red areas. It is OK to wear a loose fitting hat immediately after surgery, so long as you are careful not to rub it against the grafts while putting it on or taking it off.

Grafts: After the scabs fall off, the living cells of the hair follicle remain buried in the skin and will grow a new hair shaft, beginning between 3-4 months after surgery. Should one or two grafts become dislodged in the first few days, this will be associated with a small amount of bleeding. Don't worry about this. Simply apply gentle direct pressure with a clean cloth or gauze. Continue to use Minoxidil 5% every morning and evening. This will help the grafts to grow faster. Call Dr Woessner if you have any concerns.

Stitches: (ONLY FOR FUT (STRIP) TRANSPLANT). Your stitches should be removed at approximately 10 days. Wait until then to get a haircut or go swimming. It is usual to have some mild oozing at the suture line for the first 24-48 hours. If it does not stop with continuous gentle pressure for 30 minutes, please call us. The third day after surgery be sure to gently clean the stitches when shampooing to decrease scabbing along the sutured area. Cover your pillows, etc. with a cloth to avoid staining.

Numbness: Temporary loss of sensation in the donor area is common and temporary. Some numbness in the grafted area may also be experienced. On occasion, the numbness can persist for several weeks or even months.

Hair Growth – What to Expect: After surgery, the hair follicles typically enter a “resting phase” giving up the small remaining shaved hair. After the blood supply grows back into the follicle, a new hair shaft will emerge. You need to be patient. The start of this process could take 3-5 months and the initial hairs are usually very fine. Over time, more hairs will sprout. During this time, you may encounter several “ingrown” hairs. These will appear as small pimples, which, if painful or swollen, can be pinched or popped with a sterile sewing needle. These may also appear in the donor area where the stitches were. These are not dangerous or significant unless they become quite large. Warm compress applications are very helpful to resolve this pustule. Call Dr Woessner if you have any concerns.

On the average, when we see you for your first follow-up at 6 months, approximately 50% - 70% of your growth should be present. At 9 months, 80% should be present. This can vary considerably from one patient to the next. It is also not unusual for the growth to be faster on one side than the other. It takes a full year or more to achieve the final result. Again, please be patient and don't be disappointed at the initial 6 months growth. It takes time! Don't forget to use Minoxidil 5% on donor & recipient areas.

On-going Hair Care: Once the hair begins to grow, in 3-4 months, you treat it as your own, normal growing hair. Nothing special or different is required. You may use any shampoo or conditioner. It is OK to color the transplanted hair three weeks after surgery. Avoid perms for the first 6 months. I do not recommend any of the various hair growth remedies seen on TV. Propecia and Minoxidil (Rogaine) are still the only two FDA products proven for hair maintenance and re-growth.

Follow- Up: We will see you at the designated time for suture removal. Thereafter, I will plan to see you in 6 months and one year. Please call our office directly to schedule follow-up appointments at your convenience. Remember you signed an agreement to return for pictures. Your satisfaction is important to us and I want to keep careful track of your progress.

Thank You,

William J. Woessner, M.D.