



Scottsdale Institute Post-Op Recovery Instructions for Hair Transplant Patients

FOR MANY PATIENTS the thought of post-operative scabs and crusts adhering to the grafts for 2 to 4 weeks is enough to dissuade them from undergoing hair transplantation. Since the cosmetic visibility of scabbing is disconcerting to most patients, we discovered a technique that would prevent post-operative scabs from attaching to the grafts. After numerous attempts at different protocols, we finally perfected the “no scab” procedure a few years ago. It can now be stated with certainty that if our post-operative instructions are followed explicitly, the patient will not experience any scabbing or crusting over the transplanted grafts. The normal pinkness or redness of the skin will also resolve much faster with our “no scab” procedure.

We found that using custom-made blades to make the recipient sites afforded us the ability to make the smallest, possible slit to accommodate the follicular unit graft snugly. The result was less post-op oozing from the incision, which meant less crusting, but still some scabbing present for 14 days. We tried numerous ointments, creams and lotions, but finally discovered Polysporin Ointment and Bacitracin Ointment to be superior to any other products due to their occlusive ability. By sealing or occluding the grafts with a topical ointment, dried blood (crusts and scabs) cannot attach to the skin. Creams and lotions unfortunately do not have the same ability to seal the skin.

Post-operative protocol is as follows:

- 1.** Following the post-op shampoo the day after surgery, our medical assistant uses saline (salt water) soaked cotton tipped applicators (Q-tips) to clean any remaining

dried blood from the scalp and grafts. We then apply Polysporin Ointment or an equivalent ointment such as Bacitracin over each graft. This sounds more time-consuming than in actuality. The ointment is placed in your palm and then with the other hand, you dab several grafts at one time.

2. After we shampoo your hair the first post-op day, we ask you not to shampoo for 2 days. When you start shampooing, you are instructed not to allow the shower spray to directly hit the grafts. We have found that filling a plastic pitcher or bowl with water and then pouring it gently over your head reduced the chances of trauma to the grafts.

3. You must apply the Polysporin Ointment four times per day for four days. This is imperative, if you don't keep the grafts covered with this ointment for the full four days, you will experience crusting and scabbing. The ointment also reduces the redness over the grafts and starts the healing much faster. Most of our patients never experience any post-op graft scabbing, and most admit that they can't even see the graft sites in 2 weeks.

We have discovered that using Low Level Laser Therapy following surgery has hastened graft growth following hair transplantation. In addition, low level laser therapy is recognized as being extremely useful in skin healing.

The patient is placed under the laser after their cleanup shampoo the day after surgery and every other day for the next two weeks. Each treatment is approximately 20 minutes long in duration.

After 10 years of utilizing low level laser therapy following hair transplantation, we have found the laser to not only cause the grafts to grow faster, but also decrease post-operative "shock" to the residual hair over the donor and recipient regions. Patients have been extremely pleased that in 4 days their scalp is free of scabbing or crusting and their grafts are slightly pink. At this point it is easy to camouflage any signs of the surgical procedure.

Possible swelling

With any hair transplant, a small amount of swelling at the upper part of the forehead may develop around 24-48 hours after the treatment. Due to gravity, this swelling is observed within the first couple of days after treatment and may spread down to the eyebrows and eyelids or even reach the cheeks. It disappears by itself within a week.

Take precautions while healing

Avoid exposing the transplanted grafts or the small point-shaped crusts in the donor region to any form of mechanical strain during the next fourteen days (for example, rubbing with a towel). As skin heals, the sensation of itching may occur. Refrain from scratching any of the treated places.

Do not engage in any extreme sport activities during the following three weeks (for example, Bungee jumping, bodybuilding, soccer, football or any danger of a head bumping).