



Hair Transplant Post-Operative Care Guide

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

- Expect mild to moderate amount of pain and discomfort associated with the surgery, for which oral painkillers will be prescribed. It should decrease within 2-3 days.
- Tightness will be present both in the transplanted area as well as in the donor area. It will gradually improve over several weeks.
- A bulky cotton compression dressing will cover your scalp for 2-3 days after your surgery.
- Some oozing is to be expected from the areas of transplantation for the first 2-3 days after the surgery.
- Transplantation of the hair follicles (plugs) usually causes the hair shafts within the transplanted plugs to be shed within the first few weeks after the surgery. Regrowth of the hair shafts from the transplanted plugs will generally be expected to occur by 3-4 months after the surgery.
- Multiple sessions of transplantation are generally required to obtain the best, most natural appearing results. The exact number of sessions is sometimes difficult to predict, as it will vary depending on the response. The entire process may take 1 session (for small areas of concern) or numerous sessions over several years (for large areas of balding). These sessions are optimally spaced at 3-4 month intervals, in order to give the most recently transplanted plugs a chance to fully grow.
- You should realize that there is a definite limit as to how much hair may be transplanted. Although we will strive to give the balding areas as much coverage as possible, there is only a finite number of plugs that can be harvested.
- After the surgery, you may be prescribed Minoxidil topical solution. When it is used in conjunction with hair transplants, the "fuzzy" growth induced by the Minoxidil, will serve to further thicken the more natural appearing transplanted hair.
- There will be small crusts or scabs on each of the transplanted plugs for the first 10-14 days after the surgery. These should not be disturbed (don't pick at them or otherwise try to dislodge them, before they are ready to fall off on their own). As a result of the presence of these small scabs, the area of transplant will often be obvious to an observer. However, the area may be easily covered with any of a variety of hats, bandannas, scarves etc. Also, leaving the hair surrounding the bald areas longer in length, may allow it to cover the crusts during the healing phase.
- Expect some numbness in the area around the plug donor and recipient sites, which will resolve by itself in a few weeks.

- The only hairs that will be cut with each transplantation session are the hair shafts of the plugs being transferred. Hair that is growing in recipient areas (where plugs were previously transplanted) will be left undisturbed.
- Some mild swelling of the forehead and scalp can be expected for several days after the surgery.

CALL THE OFFICE PROMPTLY IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Development of a temperature elevation exceeding 100°F.
- Unusual bleeding or discharge from the scalp incision.
- A significant progressive increase in pain which is not easily relieved by taking your prescribed medication.
- The dressing is severely shifted or inadvertently removed within 24 hours of the surgery.

HOW DO I CARE FOR MYSELF AFTER SURGERY?

- Make arrangements to have someone drive you to, and from, your surgery.
- Have someone stay with you at least 1-2 days after your surgery.
- Take the antibiotics and pain medication only as prescribed by the surgeon.
- Do not take any Dispirin or any NSAIDs for 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after your surgery unless you first discuss it with your surgeon.
- If you are a smoker, you should not smoke for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.
- Sleep with the head elevated for the first week after surgery to minimize any swelling of the surgical area.
- It is important that the dressing, placed at the time of surgery, stay in place for at least the first 24 hours. The dressing can be removed after 2-3 days.
- After the dressing removal, place a soft, clean washcloth over the area of the transplants, and take a lukewarm shower. The shower water should be allowed to gently wash over the washcloth, thus, cleansing the wound but avoiding any direct injury to the surgical site. The rest of the scalp (without transplants) may be gently shampooed, keeping the washcloth over the transplants as protection. You should wash your hair in this manner daily for the first 3 weeks after your surgery.
- Be careful when combing your hair that you do not inadvertently catch the sutures in the donor area. Doing so is unlikely to cause any great harm, but it may be uncomfortable.
- Your scalp may be somewhat less sensitive to touch for some weeks or, occasionally, months, after surgery. For this reason, be very careful when using a hairdryer, or curling iron, as excess heat from the device may injure your scalp without you being aware of it.

- The donor area of the scalp is closed with either surgical staples or sutures. In either case, they need to be removed between 10-14 days after your surgery.
- You should do no vigorous exercise and should avoid any significant physical exertion, lifting or straining for a minimum of 3 weeks after your surgery.

RECOVERY TIMETABLE:

Approximate recovery after hair transplantation is as follows:

- DAY 1: Return home. Keep dressing undisturbed.
- DAY 2-3: Maximum aching and throbbing. Dressing removed. Start washing hair by covering the transplants with a washcloth to provide some protection. Crusts and scabs are present over transplanted plugs.
- DAYS 10-14: Stitches or surgical staples removed. Crusts and scabs mostly gone.
- WEEKS 1-4: Hairs in transplanted plugs will shed. Don't worry. This is expected.
- 3-4 MONTHS: Hair shafts should be regrowing in the transplanted plugs. Usually need to consider a new round of transplants at this time.

REMEMBER: If you have any concerns or questions, please contact our office any time. Our office should be a source of information and reassurance throughout this entire experience, from the time of your first consultation and continuing after your surgery.