

Our Goals:

The doctor will review your general medical condition, the medications you are taking and the reasons for having the procedure. If you are determined to be a good candidate he will discuss options of treatment and the goals for your surgery.

Procedures are individualized to the patient. There are several different type of skin grafts. For smaller areas we use full thickness skin grafts. These usually have the best color match, durability and there is minimal discomfort.

Split grafts are thinner and cover larger areas. Unlike full grafts that may be harvested from inconspicuous areas with little scars, split grafts are more obvious. In the past split grafts were also more painful but not today. Most are performed on an out patient basis.

Full grafts do not bleed much but split grafts were always a bloody operation. Not today, there is very little blood loss if new techniques are used.

Faster surgery, less bleeding, very little pain and even faster healing are the benefits of modern skin grafting techniques.

Before Surgery:

All medications that thin the blood may have to be stopped 2 weeks prior to surgery. A half of one aspirin thins the blood for 2 weeks! There are a host of vitamins, pain and arthritis medications that thin the blood as well.

You need to get a relative or friend to be with you for the first few days after the procedure. They will have to drive you to and from surgery and the office afterwards. Have some easy meals ready to be made. Do not plan on having friends over or leaving town for at least a week. You may be given pain medication and antibiotics. Get these before having the surgery so they are handy.

During Surgery:

General anesthesia is sometimes used. The patient is totally asleep. We do not want you in pain or moving during the surgery. This is often the case when surgery is



performed in the office using only sedation. We can work more efficiently too. Most procedures are an hour long but there will be time needed to start IV's before surgery. The recovery room period may last a few hours as well.

The incision lines are visible but often less obvious than in the past.

After the Procedure:

While still in the operating room the completed surgery is impressive to see. Soon afterwards however, the swelling and bruising starts. The more extensive the surgery, the worse the bruising and swelling. This makes sense. If a surgeon tells you that there will be minimal or no swelling or bruising then the surgery cannot be very extensive.

During the first few days after surgery the swelling and bruising worsens. The lower extremities are the worst. The pain is not usually bad. Do not be alarmed as the skin may be numb for a while. By the end of the first week the swelling and discoloration usually begins to diminish.



Most often the dressings used at the time of surgery are left in place for a few days. Some blood may seep through. Do not be alarmed, leave the dressing in place but add some dry dressing material to cover the area. If it bleeds more than this call the doctor.

Do not plan on going back to work or driving for at least the first week. You will be given pain medication and should be very careful about coordinated tasks. Even cooking is not a good idea. When in a car, always use a seat belt and sit in the back seat. People have been injured by airbags going off while in the front seat. We try to keep you safe and preserve our work.

For the first few weeks after your surgery avoid strenuous activity. No lifting over 5 pounds. Do not do housework, you need rest. Avoid alcohol, smoking or even the presence of smokers.

Do not get sun. Even when the doctor says it is OK to go outside you must use sun block of at least a number 30 SPF for at least 6 months, maybe longer. For general good health anyway you should always use sun block on exposed skin surfaces.

As nerve endings grow back the areas may become itchy. This is normal. Usually putting on some hand lotios as Vaseline Intesive Care Lotion will help.



Common over-the-counter pain, allergy and cold medications as well as arthritis drugs may thin your blood. Do not take any of these without first discussing it with your doctor.

Complications may include bleeding problems, infection nerve and muscle damage, poor healing, adverse drug and anesthetic reactions. Some may require more surgery at additional cost. The skin surface may not be perfectly even. People who smoke or used to smoke have much more healing and infection problems than patients who never smoked. The surgical area may be numb initially. Most of the sensation returns. This may be of benefit as it keeps pain to a minimum during the healing period. Hospitalization or just an overnight stay may be needed. Nerve and sensory damage may occur.

Following the doctors instructions minimizes the risk of problems. Do not do anything different without calling the doctor first. Most of the advise your friends and neighbors give you is probably incorrect. The doctor asks that you call him if you have any questions at all.

Venice Plastic Surgery

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We believe that larger scar surgeries should be performed in a hospital or hospital outpatient facility setting, not in the office. Safety is a major concern for us, and hospital facilities are much better equipped. We use the team approach with an operating room filled with registered nurses, registered OR technicians and M.D. anesthesiologists with their assistants. Also needed is a fully staffed and equipped recovery room.

Why settle for less?



Skin Grafting Surgery

This procedure is designed to replace skin lost from trauma, burns or reconstructive or ablative procedures



Venice Plastic Surgery A. E. Haas, M.D.

Reconstructive skin grafting is for men and women of any age. There is no upper limit. The patients often have skin lost through reconstructive procedures as the removal of skin cancers, or from burn injuries. Trauma is another cause of skin loss, there are multiple causes. Newer techniques diminish pain and accelerate healing. The major limitations are your own skin and underlying tissue structures. Those who have had a lot of sun exposure or who have smoked cigarettes in the past have the poorest skin quality. Some patients will require secondary "tune up" procedures to further benefit. Multiple procedures will be at additional cost but insurance should cover this but check with your policy.