

**Caring for myself after
Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy (SLNB) with
Wide Local Excision (WLE) and Full
Thick Skin Graft (FTSG)**

What are my general instructions?

1. You have received a prescription for pain medications. Follow the instructions carefully. After several days, you may find Extra Strength Tylenol is sufficient. Avoid aspirin or ibuprofen.
2. Eat a balanced diet and try to maintain good nutrition. Also, drink plenty of fluids. Some of the pain medications can cause constipation, and drinking plenty of water will help prevent this.
3. If you do get constipated, you may need a laxative. We or your pharmacist can help you with this.
4. Do not drive for at least one week after the surgery. Your reflexes are slower than you think, and any pain from the incision is distracting. Also, you cannot drive while taking narcotic pain medications. When we see you in the office, we will let you know when we think you may begin driving again.
5. Do not shower until we see you back in the office. You may sponge bathe, but do not get the site of the skin graft wet.

How will I care for the lymph node biopsy and donor site?

The **donor site** is the place where the surgeon took the skin to cover your wound. In your case, the surgeon harvested the skin graft and then found the sentinel nodes through this incision. Leave your outer dressings on for at least 72 hours. There are nylon sutures that will need to be removed in the office by your surgeon.

1. Do not apply any creams or ointments to the incision. If the incision is underneath the arm, do not use antiperspirant or deodorant, or shave under that arm.
2. You may notice some clear yellowish fluid under the skin at the site. This is known as a “seroma”, and is generally not anything to be concerned about.

3. Watch for any signs of infection including:
 - a. increase in the swelling or redness near the area of the surgery
 - b. the skin around the incision becomes hot to the touch.
 - c. thick green or yellow drainage from the wound which may be pus
 - d. bad smell around the wound
 - e. fever over 101°F
 - f. increasing pain

If you have any of these signs, call to make an appointment to be seen office. The contact information is on page 3.

How will I care for the site of the resection and skin graft?

1. There is a large, bulky dressing at the site of the skin graft. This needs to stay in place and should not be disturbed. We will want to remove this dressing in 5 to 7 days.
2. Fluid may drain through the dressing. This is normal, and you may change the outermost dressings if needed.
3. It is **very** important that you keep the site of the skin graft still so that it heals properly. Avoid bumping or injuring that site. We may put a splint on to help remind you not to move that extremity.
4. If the graft is on the leg, you will need crutches. Do not bear any weight on that leg. Plan on being at bed rest for the first several days after the surgery. When in bed or a chair, keep that leg elevated on several pillows.
5. After we remove the dressing in the office, we will teach you how to change the dressings and keep the site clean.
6. Call if there are any signs of infection in the area including:
 - a. increase in the swelling or redness near the area of the surgery
 - b. the skin around the incision becomes hot to the touch.
 - c. green or yellow drainage from the wound which may be pus
 - d. bad smell around the wound
 - e. fever over 101°F
 - f. increasing pain

If you have any of these signs, call to make an appointment to be seen.
The contact information is below.

What is my follow-up care?

We will need to see you back in the office in approximately 5 to 7 days so that we may remove the dressings and examine the site of the skin graft. Your surgeon will likely contact you in one week with your pathology report. Depending on that report, you may need additional surgery, a referral to another physician (such as a medical oncologist), or routine follow-up. We will make these arrangements when we know the final pathology.

Remember that healing from surgery takes time. If you have any questions about your procedure, your follow-up instructions, or plan of care, do not hesitate to call the Surgical Oncology Nurse Practitioner.

What is the contact information for Surgical Oncology?

- During business hours Monday-Friday 9-4:30 pm call the Surgical Oncology clinic at (734) 936-6000.
- For urgent calls after 4:30 pm, weekends and holidays, ask the operator to page the surgical oncology on-call resident at **(734) 936-6267**.

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Surgical Oncology
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