

Postoperative Instructions

- Following the surgery you should take it very easy for the first 24 hours. Basically, you return home and watch television or read a relaxing book/magazine. You should not perform any strenuous activity (e.g. weight lifting, shoveling snow, intercourse, or aerobic exercise) for at least the first 24 hours. It is additionally suggested that you avoid more strenuous activities for an additional 2 weeks. If you work at a job that requires physical activity, it may be wise to take a week off. If your job is primarily sedentary, you may return to work in 2-3 days.
- Gently apply CRUSHED ice or frozen peas in a plastic bag (covered with a face cloth/towel) to the recipient and donor sites frequently (off and on for 2 minutes at a time-alternate 2 minutes on the top and then 2 minutes on the donor site) for the first few days. Do not apply HARD ice cubes as they may have sharp/rough edges.
- If there is a small amount of bleeding following the surgery, simply apply firm pressure through the bandage (or through a clean face cloth) for approximately 10-15 minutes and the slight bleeding/oozing should stop. This is not an uncommon problem so do not panic if it happens.
- You should not wash your hair for 2 days. This will allow scab formation to “cement” the graphs into position. When you do start washing your hair/scalp again you must do so very carefully/gently. You should initially soak your head/scalp in clean warm water in the bathtub for about 4-5 minutes. Next apply a gentle shampoo generously but gently to the scalp especially on the area that received the graphs and over the donor scar. One could gently use the tips of ones fingers or, alternatively if your hair is thin, use a clean shaving brush to lather the shampoo. This cleaning step should be repeated twice. When finished thoroughly rinse the scalp in a gentle manner until all the soap is removed. You may allow the hair to air dry or, if you do use a hair dryer, use it at a distance so that the scalp does not receive much blowing force or heat. To gently style you hair you may want to try using a baby brush, as their bristles are quite soft and gentle. This regime should be followed for 7-10 days, after which you may resort to your normal hairstyling, etc. Note: you may use a hair conditioner following your shampoo to help restore some body to your hair. “Toppiks” may be used after the first 3-4 days (it is a concealing/camouflage treatment product), if desired.
- For the first 4-5 nights after the surgery, you should sleep with your head elevated/inclined by at least a 45 degree angle. This is to help minimize postoperative edema/swelling around the forehead and the eyes which is quite common but not serious self limited complication. The easiest way to do this is by propping up your head/upper torso by using 3-4 pillows. Alternatively, if able, you sleep in an “Easy Boy” recliner chair with your head propped up in the semi-reclined position. We do often give medication to reduce postoperative swelling but it still frequently occurs and at times, can be moderately severe for 2-3 days. Luckily, the tendency for this problem reduces by you sleeping with your head elevated and it is less and less of a problem with each successive surgery session.
- Do not pick at the scabs that will form after a few days. They are directly attached to the graphs and the scabs will fall off, on their own accord, in 7-10 day, in most cases. If you feel they are unsightly try covering them with your pre-existing hair, using “Toppiks”, or try wearing a loosely-fitted cotton perforated (perforated to allow air circulation) hat or camouflage.
- If you were previously using minoxidil you may start to use minoxidil again 2 days after the surgery (please remember to spray it on gently). You may take Propecia during or immediately after the transplant session.
- You should take all medications that were given to you, especially the antibiotics. The pain/sleep medications are a good idea to take for the first 2 days but you will unlikely need them after that time.

- Avoid the use of Aspirin/Advil and Vitamin C & E for 1-2 weeks postoperatively. Also try to refrain from alcohol for at least 2 days.
- You may have several weeks of lack of sensation or a “numb” feeling in the operative areas. This is quite normal. Usually, the feeling returns in 4-6 months as the cut nerve endings regrow into the operated area. If you have a significant degree of “itchiness” of the scalp, you may want to try REACTINE (that may be purchased “over the counter” at any pharmacy).
- If you lose a plug or two, don’t worry, we will replace them the next session for no charge.
- If you have any serious concerns/problems call (506) 652-1044 (Monday to Friday 10:00-1:00& 2:15-5:00) or (after hours pager) 1-506-638-0334 and advise the answering service that you are a transplant patient and/or leave your number to be called. My cell/mobile phone number is (506) 333-0039. If you wish, your local outpatient department may be a viable alternative, especially if you are at a distance, geographically.
- Your recent transplanted hair will likely fall out in a matter of weeks but do not panic. The roots have just gone into a resting phase and new hair will start to grow again in a matter of 12-16 weeks. From that point on, the hair should be as permanent as the other hair on the back of your head. ENJOY YOUR NEW HAIR!

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