

Pre and Post-Operative Instructions for Follicular Unit Extraction

Hair restoration is a delicate process. Your adherence to the following instructions will help assure that you get the very best results.

1. Before your procedure

- **For 10 days prior to your procedure**, do not take aspirin or Vitamin E, ginkgo biloba, or any multivitamins (these contain Vitamin E). Many medications contain aspirin, so please be sure to read all medication labels. You may take acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) in place of aspirin.
- **For 3 days prior to your procedure**, do not take anti-inflammatories (e.g. ibuprofen), avoid drinking alcohol, and do not get a sunburn.
- **Make arrangements for transportation** home if you will be receiving any sedation during the procedure. The type of sedation you receive will be up to you and the doctor, but most patients choose to take an oral sedative for a relaxing experience. FUE procedures typically take 6 to 9 hours, depending upon the number of grafts.
- **If you live out of town**, make arrangements with the office for transportation and hotel accommodations.
- **If you have gray hair and you color it**, make sure it gets colored within 3 days prior to your procedure to permit better visualization of the hairs. You will be able to color it again 2 weeks after the procedure.
- **Your hair in the donor area** will be trimmed quite short to permit the extraction of hairs. Depending upon the number of grafts, this may involve trimming a small area that can easily be covered up by surrounding hair, or may involve the entire back and/or sides of the scalp. You should plan accordingly, and discuss this with the doctor and/or his assistants as to what is recommended. The hair on the rest of your head can be any length.
- **For best healing**, please refrain from smoking for 1 week prior to and 1 week after your procedure.
- **Vitamin C** (1000 to 2000 mg a day) for 1 week prior to your procedure may help with healing.

2. The day of your procedure

- Have a regular breakfast, but no caffeine in the morning. You will be provided lunch and offered snack breaks during your procedure.
- Routine prescribed medicines (e.g. blood pressure) should be taken in the morning.
- Wear a shirt that can be buttoned in the front rather than a pull-over. Remove all jewelry, watches, etc.
- Be prepared to remove contact lenses before your procedure if you normally remove them to sleep.
- Please feel free to bring any music on CDs or MP3 players to which you wish to listen during your procedure. Our procedure rooms are also equipped with satellite radio.

3. After your procedure

Medications – These are the medications that will be provided by the office. If you are not able to take any of them (i.e. due to allergies) please let us know **before** your procedure. This will allow us to phone in your prescription to your local pharmacy.

- ___ **Keflex** - antibiotic to prevent infection. Take 1 pill twice a day for 3 days.
- ___ **Tylenol #3** - mild pain pill containing codeine. Take 1 to 2 pills every 4 to 6 hours as needed for any discomfort in the donor area. Advil, Aleve, and Tylenol are also very effective, and should be taken at the earliest sign of discomfort.
- ___ **Prednisone** -to prevent swelling. Take 1 pill (50 mgs) with food once a day for 2 days.
- ___ You need to purchase an antibiotic ointment like Bacitracin or Neosporin to apply to the donor area twice a day for the first 3 days after your procedure.
- ___ Please let us know if you would like a prescription for a sleeping pill and/or a stronger pain medication such as Percocet or Vicodin.

Sleeping and Activity

- The first night sleep with your head elevated on several pillows or in a recliner chair to prevent swelling. Place a towel under your head if there is any bleeding.
- A narrow band of tape may be applied across your forehead to help prevent swelling. You may cover this tape with a hat and shower with it on. You may remove it typically on the third or fourth day, but if there is any swelling above the level of the tape at that time, we suggest you leave the tape in place **continually** for another 2 days.
- Avoid any strenuous physical activity the first 2 days to prevent loss of grafts or increased swelling. After 5 days, weight lifting, heavy exercise, etc. may be resumed, with swimming able to be resumed at 10 days.
- No direct sun exposure to the scalp for more than 30 minutes at a time for the first 5 days. Wearing a hat provides adequate protection.

Caring for and Cleaning the Scalp

- Your scalp will be cleaned before leaving the office after your procedure. Occasionally there is some slight bleeding from the back (donor area) and or several graft sites the first 24 hours. Simply apply light pressure with a clean cloth or gauze for 10 minutes and, if necessary, use the **elastic headband** that is provided to you to hold the gauze in place for 12 to 24 hours.
- Most patients return to the office the first or second day after the procedure to have their hair washed. You may then start washing it gently on the 3rd day, and regularly on the 6th day.
Your appointment is scheduled for _____.

- If you are not coming to the office to have your hair washed, you may gently clean it on the second day as follows (this is also the routine to use for the first 5 days after your procedure):
 - **Wet your head** in the shower with warm water, using a bowl to pour it over the scalp (top, sides, and back).
 - **Using a mild shampoo, lather** it in your hands, and gently pat it onto the graft areas, while lightly rubbing it into the other parts of the scalp, including the sides and back.
 - **Gently rinse off** the shampoo, then pat dry.
 - **Combing**, performed gently, is permitted on the third day.
 - **Continue** this routine daily for the first 5 days. After this, you may begin to shower normally, letting the water hit your scalp.
 - **Any remaining crusts** after 8 or 9 days should be rubbed off. Stop if there is any pain or bleeding, then wait 2 more days to begin rubbing.

GraftCyte for Post-Procedure Care

GraftCyte accelerates the healing of the graft areas, due to a combination of the copper it contains and its ability to keep the area moist. Spray the GraftCyte spray that is provided by the office to the graft areas every 30 minutes while awake for the first 3 to 4 days.

What to Expect

- **Some numbness** at the graft and donor sites is normal. It can take several weeks to resolve.
- **Some of the transplanted hairs** will fall off with the crusts at 5 to 7 days. DO NOT PANIC for these are only the hair shafts, while the hair follicles remain in the scalp. Most of the rest of the transplanted hairs will fall out over the next 2 weeks. In as soon as 3 to 4 months, the new hair shafts will begin to grow *in a natural fashion* and will continue to grow at the normal rate of one half to 1 inch a month. Sometimes it can take 7 to 9 months or more for all the hairs to start growing. Be patient.
- **To accelerate the growth of the new hairs** I recommend patients begin applying 5% minoxidil (extra strength Rogaine®) once or twice a day starting three weeks after the procedure. Female patients should use 2% minoxidil. **If the minoxidil should cause redness or irritation of the scalp, stop using it for 1 week then resume once every other day.** Once the hairs are growing in, at around 4 months, the minoxidil can be stopped, and the transplanted hairs will continue to grow. The occasional patient is sensitive to minoxidil (scalp itching, chest palpitations, lightheadedness) in which case it should be stopped.
- To accelerate healing and speed up hair regrowth, patients who have had transplants are offered, **at no charge, low level laser light therapy** for the first month. This therapy can be started as soon as the day after the procedure when the hair wash is performed in the office. It consists of once or twice weekly (completely painless) 20 minute treatments spent under the laser hood. Studies have shown that this therapy may also have some benefit with long term use in helping to slow down the progression of hair loss in the future.
- **Be patient** for the hairs to grow in. As they emerge from the scalp, occasionally there will be a few acne-like pimples. If this happens, apply warm soaks and antibiotic ointment several times a day for 3 days. If not resolved, please call the office.

