



Skin graft storage

You have agreed to provide a skin graft which will be used in your treatment.

The skin graft will not be used to treat any person other than you.

It may be necessary to store your skin graft before your treatment in a secure temperature controlled dedicated refrigerator. This process will be covered by the licence regulations stipulated by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA).

Tissue Services will ensure that your skin sample is stored appropriately according to licence regulations stipulated by the HTA.

Frequently asked questions

What is a skin graft?

A skin graft is a piece of healthy skin, which is taken from one area of the body (referred to as the donor site) and placed over an affected area.

What are the benefits of having a skin graft?

Skin grafts can help to heal affected areas quicker, can reduce pain and discomfort when dressings are changed and can reduce the chance of infection and scarring.

What are the potential side effects/ complications of having skin grafts?

Most skin grafts are successful, however in some cases they do not take or donor sites do not heal well and further grafting may be required.

Short term issues at the donor site include pain and itching during healing, which the staff in the Burns Centre can help with.

Long term, your donor site will leave permanent scars, may be a different colour to your normal skin, or rarely become raised or thickened.

Similar to any other wound, there is a risk that donor sites may become infected, however this is rare.

It is important to be aware of the signs of infection (high temperature, smelly discharge, redness, bleeding and swelling around the graft/donor area) and speak to your Burns/Plastics team for advice.

As with any surgery, there are risks associated with receiving anaesthetics. Your consultant will discuss these with you prior to surgery.

Why does the skin graft require storage?

Storage allows the application of your skin graft at a later date, sometimes without the need for additional anaesthetics.

Will storing the skin sample have any effect on treatment?

This is very unlikely. Skin grafts are only stored for a maximum period of five days. The appearance of skin grafts is largely unchanged following storage.

In order to abide by the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007 (as amended) licence regulations, all patients whose skin graft is stored must also consent have a blood sample taken for screening.

What is blood screening?

Screening is when a patient's blood sample is sent to an accredited hospital laboratory where standard blood tests are carried out.

The blood sample will be tested for HIV 1 & 2, syphilis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, cytomegalovirus, toxoplasma and HTLV 1 & 2.

If any of the test results come back positive, you will be informed and further support will be offered to you.

If you choose not to have the blood sample taken for testing then unfortunately we will not be able to store your skin graft if required.

It is important that you discuss all queries you may have with your surgeon before consenting to any procedures.

Department address and contact information:

Burns and Plastics Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2GW Telephone: 0121 627 2000

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.

Information for Patients

Patient Declaration Form:

(if used please detach patient declaration section and return to Tissue Services, Burns Centre, Level 2, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, Mindelsohn Way, Birmingham, B15 2GW):

- ☐ I understand the nature of the treatment being offered to me
- ☐ I consent that my skin graft may be stored if required
- ☐ I consent to have blood taken to be tested as described above
- ☐ I consent that my skin graft will be disposed if not used

Patient signature: _____

Date: _____

Affix patient sticker here