

What to expect after flap surgery

This information will help you to know what to do to care for yourself after your surgery. Your doctor may also give you instructions that are more detailed.

Before your surgery

A member of the health care team will review this information with you and answer your questions.

After your surgery

You will stay in the Burn Unit at the Hamilton General Hospital for 3 to 5 days. You will go home with home care support arranged by the LHIN Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) or be transferred to another health care facility closer to your home if necessary.

Your nurse and doctor will check your flap often for signs of complications. Drains will be placed near your flap site and will remain for a number of days. Your LHIN CCAC nurse will continue to care for these drains if you have them when you go home.

You will have a special bed to help prevent pressure on the healing wound site. You will also need to have a special bed at home which will be arranged through the LHIN CCAC.

You will be on **strict bed rest for 6 weeks**. This means you are not allowed to get out of bed for any reason. Arrange to have a family member or caregiver provide your meals and medications between visits from the Personal Support Worker (PSW). A PSW may spend up to 3 hours a day with you. If you need wound care, a nurse will visit you once a day. The staples and sutures will be removed as directed by your doctor.

The head of the bed should be no higher than 15 to 30 degrees to prevent pressure on the flap. You also must lie in a position that avoids pressure and tension on the flap and donor sites. You will need to be turned and repositioned every 2 to 4 hours. Keep your skin dry. Your wounds will need to be checked every time you are repositioned.

If you smoke, we recommend that you quit, but realize this is difficult. There are health benefits to you from quitting. Quitting smoking can:

- improve your wound healing and recovery
- help prevent infections



If you want to quit, there is a lot of help and support available for you. You may want to talk with your family doctor or pharmacist about quitting and what medications may help you quit. For support or help to stay smoke-free:

- talk with a member of your health care team
- contact Smokers' Helpline toll free at 1-877-513-5333 or visit www.smokershelpline.ca

Transportation home

You will need to be transferred home on a stretcher via patient transportation services (Spectrum or Voyageur) and will be given an information sheet, which explains how to book this. You are responsible **for this cost**. Request to talk with the Burn Unit Social Worker if you have questions or concerns once you are admitted to the Burn Unit.

Follow up appointment

You will be notified of a follow up appointment by the Doctor's office.