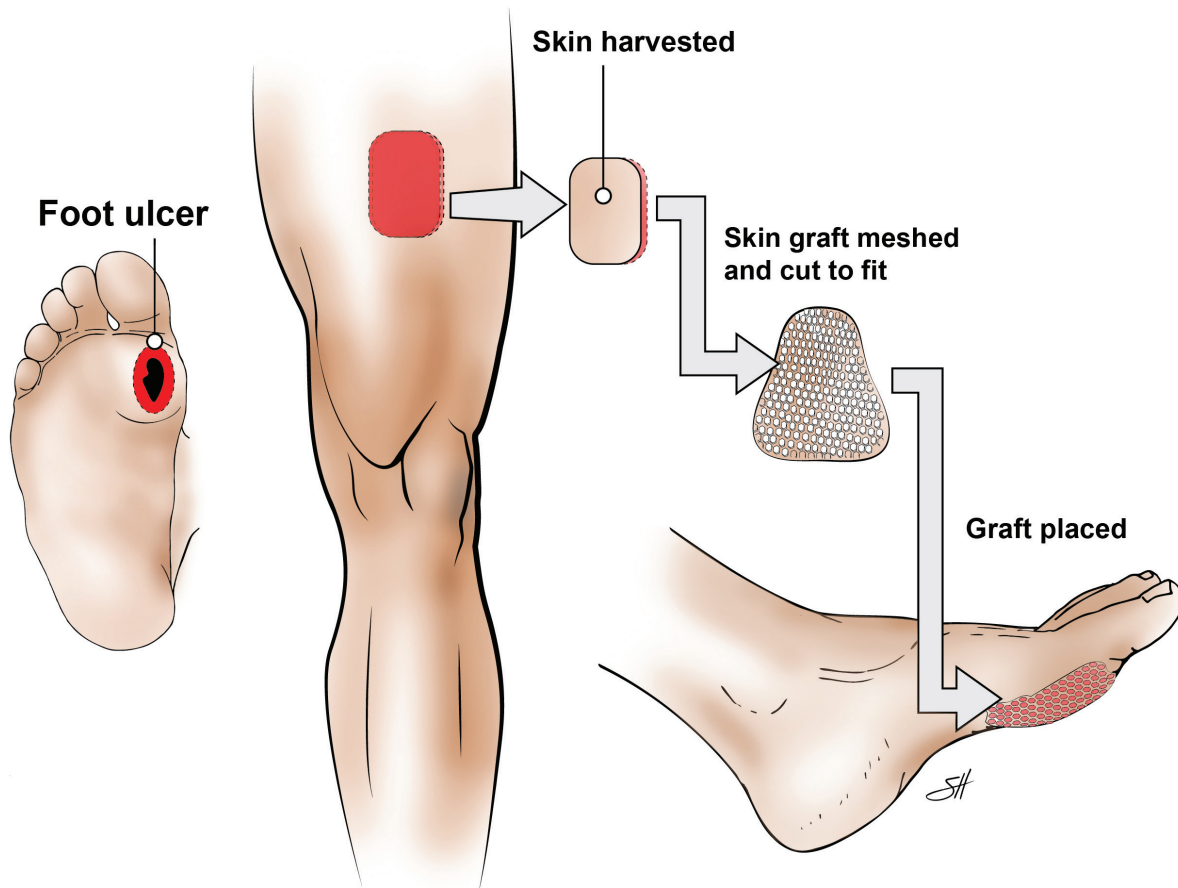


Surgery

SPLIT-THICKNESS SKIN GRAFT

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A split-thickness skin graft is a procedure in which a surgeon removes a thin layer of healthy skin (donor site) and places it on an open wound (recipient site).

During Surgery

- You will either be given intravenous (IV) moderate sedation or general anesthesia to be asleep during the procedure, and a shot of numbing medicine will be applied to numb the area. This depends on the size of the graft.
 - With moderate sedation, you will be given IV anxiety and pain medications. You will be awake and able to follow directions but will be calm and not feel pain.
 - With general anesthesia, you will be fully asleep and pain-free.
- The surgeon will remove a strip of healthy skin with a special tool. This skin usually comes from the upper thigh.
- The surgeon will use another device to mesh that strip of skin so that it has tiny holes and can cover a larger area.
- Next the surgeon will place the healthy skin mesh over your open wound and secure it with stitches or staples.
- Your donor site will be covered with a clear adhesive bandage.
- A negative pressure wound vacuum dressing (wound vac) will be put on the wound prior to leaving the operating room.
- The surgery will take about one and a half hours

After Surgery

Recovery - What to Expect

- Your length of stay in the hospital will depend on the location, size and type of skin graft. Your surgery team will discuss the expected hospital stay based on your wound and management plan.
- You may be admitted to the hospital for at least five days after your procedure while the wound vac helps the skin graft incorporate into your wound. You may be discharged home with the wound vac.
- After the procedure, you will need to avoid putting pressure on the foot. You will need to use either a walker, wheelchair or knee scooter to help you move around while in the hospital. Use the least amount of pressure on the foot while transferring to the bed or bathroom.
- Your donor site will be covered with a bandage and clear adhesive bandage called Tegaderm. You will grow a new layer of skin in the place where the strips of skin were removed.
- Your donor site may continue to ooze a small amount of blood after the procedure and collect under the clear adhesive bandage. Your nurse will change the bandage as needed.
- On the fifth day, the surgery team will remove the wound vac from your foot to inspect the healing of the skin graft.

Activity

- Avoid walking on the foot as this will delay wound healing.
- Avoid wearing a regular shoe on the foot with the surgical wound.
- Your surgeon may prescribe a special offloading shoe such as a surgical shoe or boot or knee scooter to help with transferring to the bathroom.
- Keep your foot up and elevated at heart level when sitting to prevent swelling which may cause pain.
- Cover the foot with a plastic bag or special covering while showering to prevent getting the dressing wet.

Wound Care

- Keep a dressing over the wound at all times.
- Wound care orders will be provided to you. Please follow these instructions, as ordered. These will be specific to your exact wound and dressing applied after surgery.
- The wound care orders will be performed by either home health, nursing facility/rehab nurse or family member.
- If applicable, our office will submit for home health coverage to perform wound care. If your insurance company approves, you will be assigned a nurse to perform the wound care at least three times per week. Depending on frequency of dressing changes, a family member may have to perform dressing changes on alternate days.
- To avoid changing the color of the grafted skin, avoid sunlight exposure to the area for several months.

Medications

- Your surgeon will prescribe antibiotics, pain medication and wound care instructions for discharge. Take your medication and follow orders as prescribed.
- While you are taking pain medication, be sure to monitor your bowel movements and drink enough fluids to prevent constipation.
- If you have any questions, please call the office or send a MyChart message.

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following symptoms:



- Bleeding from your surgical site
- Pain uncontrolled by pain medication
- Coolness and/or numbness in the leg or foot
- Changes in color of skin on the leg or the foot
- Incision that opens up or pulls apart
- Signs of infection around the incision (redness, drainage, warmth, pain)
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Persistent nausea or diarrhea



You will follow up in our office in one or two weeks after your surgery. An X-ray of your foot may be necessary to evaluate progress. You will receive an appointment confirmation call one to two business days prior to the appointment. This information will also be available on your MyChart portal.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your procedure or care, please give us a call or send a message through the MyChart portal. If you are having trouble logging on or need to set up, please call MyChart Support.

Call 911, or go to Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center, if you experience the following:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid, irregular heartbeat
- Changes in your speech, difficulty concentrating or weakness on one side of your body

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