



Skin Substitutes and Grafts

What Are Skin Substitutes?

Skin substitutes, often referred to as cellular and tissue based products (CTP), are products made from natural or synthetic materials designed to replace the form and function of your skin. Although no single perfect skin substitute exists, many skin characteristics and functions can be restored. Skin substitutes can provide either temporary wound coverage or permanent wound closure. Your physician will consider individual and clinical concerns when choosing the right one for you. The goal is to use one that provides early healing, stabilizes the wound, prevents infection, reduces pain and allows early return to daily activities.

Types of Skin Substitutes

Skin substitutes are made from natural (biological) or synthetic materials. When made from both, they are called biosynthetic or bioengineered. Since biological skin substitutes may be derived from infant, fetal or donor tissue and animals, such as cow and pigs, religious and cultural ethics must be considered. In addition, allergic individuals may suffer a reaction.

What Are Skin Grafts?

Skin grafts cover a wound to provide protection and keep the wound moist as it heals. Depending on a patient's health and available undamaged skin, a graft may use skin from

- A patient's own body (autograft)
- Another human being, often from a donor skin banks (allograft)
- An animal, such as a pig (xenograft)
- Skin grafts are either temporary or permanent. Allografts and xenografts are temporary while autografts are permanent. Permanent autografts can restore most skin function.

Aftercare

Fresh skin substitute and skin grafts require extra care. You will need to return to the wound center as directed to have the dressings changed. If you are unable to return as scheduled, contact the wound center for instructions. Based on your healing goals and the product used, several applications may be required. Your physician will determine your needs based on the clinical evaluation during your visits.

Practice proper wound care, eat a healthy diet to promote healing and continue any prescribed medications and treatments. After several weeks, most patients experience tissue regeneration and regain function and flexibility.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:
Wound Recovery and Hyperbaric Medicine
Center**

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