

GRAFT FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMME

Following your graft operation, you will need to take some time to recover. During this period we would advise you to take things at your own pace. Once you have overcome the initial discomfort and your wounds are healed, you should walk as much as you are able. Walking will encourage the blood to flow through the graft and around your body. You may find it helpful to elevate your leg whilst you are sitting as this will help to reduce some of the swelling which you will invariably experience.

As part of the follow-up of your graft, research has shown that the majority of grafts will last as long as the patients require them. However during the first year after this operation a small number of grafts may develop slight irregularities and narrowings. Many of these cause no problems whatsoever. Some, however, may progress and form a significant narrowing in the graft which may put the graft at risk of failing.

By scanning the graft with ultrasound, it is possible to detect small changes in the flow within the graft. This might indicate a problem before you will even have noticed any symptoms. If a problem is detected it may be necessary to keep a closer eye on the graft by scanning it more frequently or it may be necessary to correct the problem surgically.

The first scan will be a month to six weeks after the operation followed by further scans booked on the basis of these results. This follow-up will usually continue for a year but may be longer if further treatment has been required.

As mentioned the majority of patients do not develop any problems. However, in the event of an emergency, we would like you to know what to do so please read the following carefully.

If you experience a sudden onset of symptoms similar to those you had before the operation such as pain or cramp in the muscles when you walk, or a painful or cold foot, you must not hesitate to contact us at the

Vascular Unit

The single most important factor that affects the life of the graft is smoking. If you do continue to smoke you must be aware that you are putting your graft at a much higher risk of blocking. We cannot emphasise enough how important it is to stop smoking.

If you would like any further information or help, please do not hesitate to contact us.

E-mail surgeons@surgcare.co.za

Web page: www.surgcare.co.za