Microvascular composite tissue transfer surgery involves transferring available donor tissue from one site to another body where it provides an essential function. To accomplish the operation, the microsurgeon uses an operating microscope to see the tiny blood vessels that he must connect. These connections must be very accurate so circulation to the transferred flap is maintained. Blood flow through the vessels into the flap is necessary to keep the flap alive and healthy in the new location. This delicate surgery often takes four to eight hours to perform and requires 5 to 7 days in the hospital. If the connected blood vessels clot off after surgery, emergency surgery is required to reopen the blood flow to the flap.

The following instructions are intended to help prepare you for microvascular surgery.

**BEFORE SURGERY:**

1. Do not take aspirin, aspirin-containing medications, Ibuprofen, St. John’s Wort, or large doses of Vitamin E for 2 weeks prior to surgery and for 2 weeks following. Contact your pharmacist if you are unsure if a medication contains aspirin. Tylenol is okay.

2. Absolutely **NO SMOKING** or use of nicotine-containing products for 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.

3. It is important to maintain good nutrition with balanced meals. Drink plenty of fluid.

4. Arrange to have a physical examination by your family physician within 7 days prior to your surgery.

5. Report to this office if any signs of a cold, infection, skin eruption or fever occurring 1 to 3 days prior to your surgery.

6. **DO NOT** eat or drink anything after midnight before surgery—not even water. If you are on any medications please consult your family physician regarding what medications must be taken the morning of your surgery.

7. You must arrange a responsible adult to drive you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours after discharge.

8. Remove all nail polish and trim nails on the affected hand the day before surgery. Do not wear any rings to the hospital.
Microvascular Surgery
Page 2


10. Bring a soft, large, loose fitting outfit (sweat suit) to wear home. It is likely you will have a big bulky bandage and will need clothes to fit over it.

11. Bring your admitting orders and physical examination forms with you to the hospital.

AFTER SURGERY:

1. You may be admitted to the intensive Care Unit to spend the first night after surgery. If all goes well you will probably be transferred to the microsurgery floor and be given food and fluids in a day or so.

2. Specially trained nurses will be using circulation monitors to assure continues blood flow in the transferred tissue. One monitor uses tiny implanted thermometers to make sure warm blood is flowing into the part. Another monitor commonly used is a Doppler. The Doppler acts like a microphone that amplifies the sound of the blood flowing through the connected blood vessels. It is a painless process.

3. You will be required to stay in bed with the surgical site elevated for approximately 3 to 5 days.

4. Remember to cough and deep breath at least every couple of hours following surgery and when awake. This will help clear lungs while you are on bed rest and speed your recovery.

5. Expect your hospitalization to last around 5-7 days.

6. Follow up visits ARE IMPORTANT! Please follow your physician’s instructions for follow up.

7. Take the antibiotics and pain medications as directed. Discomfort diminishes appreciably after 48 hours. However, you are encourages to take pain tablets as needed.

8. Good nutrition and fluid intake are essential to wound healing. Eat well-balanced meals. Drink plenty of fluids.

9. In an attempt to prevent blood vessel repairs from clotting, you must NOT smoke nor can you be in a room where others are smoking for two weeks following surgery. There are no exceptions to this rule. Caffeine-containing and chocolate products will also be restricted.
10. Protect your surgical site from extremes of hot or cold temperatures.

11. Additional instructions for bandage care, walking and other care necessities will be provided upon discharge.

12. Do not drive if you are taking prescription pain medications.

13. Scars will flatten and lighten in color within 12-18 months.

14. Please do not hesitate to call our office with questions or concerns at 612-335-9032.