



Preoperative shave

Shaving the recipient area before a Follicular Unit Transplantation

There are multiple technical factors that come into play during the creation of recipient sites and the subsequent follicular unit graft placement. These include:

- When thinning areas are shaved down the “thinning process” takes on a different meaning. With the use of magnification it will be seen that some follicular bundles are absent (and there are wider spaces between remaining bundles) and that some bundles are significantly miniaturized. It will then be possible to place new recipient sites in the place of absent bundles and alongside miniaturized bundles to recreate the density. This can also be done in a uniform manner so that if the pre-existing hair eventually disappears, due to progression of hair loss, the hair transplant can still look reasonably natural. If the recipient site is not shaved the hair restoration surgeon must part through the hair again and again looking for any empty spaces and trying to fill the spaces as best as possible. This is not really as exact a process but much more hit or miss.
- The hair exits the scalp at an exact angle. The only way to precisely match that angle is to buzz the recipient hair down (in a way similar to how all hair transplant doctors need to shave the donor hair when taking out the donor strip).
- Transaction of existing hair below the skin surface is possible if the incisions are not made exactly parallel to the surrounding bundles. We often see this as a “halo” type effect when performing repair procedures.
- When inserting grafts the technicians can easily identify the recipient sites and ensure that all sites are filled. This can be achieved with no trauma to the pre-existing hair.
- When hair is buzzed to manipulation of the pre-existing hair is required at all. When the hair is not shaved it needs to be combed through (hundreds of times) by the physician who makes the recipient sites and again by the technician who places the grafts into the sites. This repetitive trauma of combing through the hair again and again could result in “hair shock”, a shedding of the existing hair. When this hair falls out in 2 to 3 weeks there will be a 2 to 3 month wait before it returns. Whereas if the hair were buzzed it would grow from day one and keep growing. A number 3 buzz cut often will look good at 10 to 14 days post operatively and blend in with the recipient site well.

All these factors are relatively unimportant if you are trying to place 2 or 3 hundred grafts into recipient sites however if you wish to have the utmost of refined results the difference is night and day.