

Scar Care Instructions

Scars are a natural part of the body's healing process. The location of scars, the nature of the wound (surgery, accident, disease) and the quality of patient skin all affect the appearance of scars. Scars change and mature over 12-18 months from the time of injury or surgery, and go through several healing phases:

- **Inflammatory phase (Weeks 1-2):** during this time the scar will be swollen, red, and tender as the body has increased blood flow to the area. Skin may slough at the edges of the scar or skin graft
- **Proliferative phase (weeks 2-6):** in this phase the body is depositing increased collagen into the wound, but in a disorganized manner. The scar may become raised and hard during this time. The scar will likely be pink or red and visible
- **Remodeling phase (6 weeks – 18 months):** during this time the body is softening and flattening the scar. The collagen is being broken down and reorganized, and the color will fade from the scar

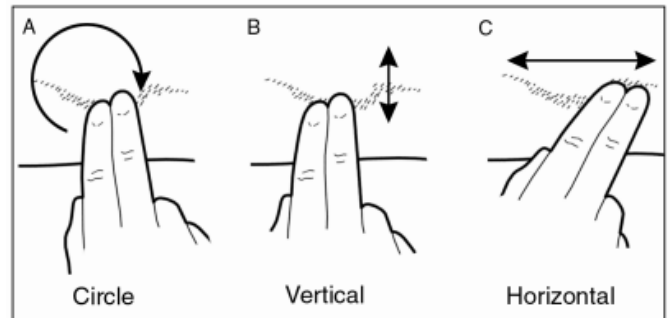
HOW CAN I REDUCE THE APPEARANCE OF MY SCAR?

As the scar matures and changes during the recovery process, massage and moisturization can help to soften a scar and reduce the appearance. This promotes collagen remodeling, flattens scars, and can help correct contracture or shortening of scar tissue. The proliferative and remodeling phases are the best time to perform massage.

HOW TO PERFORM SCAR MASSAGE:

You can begin performing scar massage at 2 weeks, or when instructed by your surgeon. All sutures should be removed, and there should not be any scabs or open wounds.

Use the pads of your fingers to massage the scar and tissue surrounding the scar. Apply a small amount of moisturizing lotion to your fingers. You should apply firm pressure – enough to see the skin lighten in color or blanch due to the pressure. Massage in multiple directions: small circles over the scar, horizontally along the length of scars, and perpendicular to the scar tissue. Perform this massage 2-3 times daily for several minutes.



WHAT LOTION SHOULD I USE ON MY SCAR?

Any moisturizing lotion without perfumes, acids (including hyaluronic acid), or retinoids is ok to use for scar massage. Do not use any lotion containing vitamin E for the first month after your surgery. Antibiotic ointments should be stopped one week after your surgery.

Recommended scar treatments: Aquaphor, Vaseline, Eucerin, Nivea, Aveeno, silicone scar gel, cocoa butter, coconut oil. Silicone scar tape can be an effective addition as well, but should be worn for 18+ hours each day for it to be effective.

ADDITIONAL TREATMENT OPTIONS:

Some scars may benefit for further revision with dermabrasion, laser treatment, steroid injection, or surgical revision. If you have questions about any of these treatments, discuss them with your surgeon.

If you have questions about any instructions, please contact our office at **928-774-2300**