

## Scar Management (Hand Therapy Home Programme)

This leaflet will assist you with the effective treatment of your scar.

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### Facts about scars?

- A scar forms as the body responds to an injury or incision to the skin and soft tissues. It comprises of a rich vascular supply, variety of cells and collagen or fibrous tissue.
- The type of scar that develops is dependent on family history, age, ethnicity and site of the surgery or injury, as well as the compliance in scar management as advised by the therapist. Previously may provide an indication for how subsequent scarring may present.
- The scar goes through phases of changes, from the active changeable stage, to the maturation stage, where further improvement is unlikely. The total period of maturation is about two years.
- It is essential that management of the scar starts as early as possible to minimize the effects and maximise the chances of improvement.

### What are the most common issues we see in scars?

#### 1) Sensation changes

You might experience numbness or decreased feeling, or even hypersensitivity in your scar

#### 2) Pain

Your scar and its surrounding areas might be tender or even painful to touch

#### 3) Altered texture

Your scar might be raised or differently textured or pigmented compared to the other areas of your skin.

#### 4) Scar sticking to other tissues

Your scar and its surrounding areas might feel "stuck" into the deeper structures of your hand and is more difficult to move compared to the uninjured parts of your skin.

## How to deal with scars?

### Manual Massage

Regular gentle massage in circles and even in a slight pinching motion should be done on and around the scar for at least 10 minutes, five times each day can help prevent the scar from “sticking” to the soft tissues beneath it.

It also helps to reduce redness and swelling and speed up the flattening. You may use a white, unscented moisturiser (Dermatix or E45) when doing this.

Frequent touch on the scar also helps with reducing hypersensitivity.

### Electric Scar Massage

You can utilise vibration to encourage the breakdown of extra scar tissue, using a small scar massager or even your phone or electric toothbrush. Run the device on and around the scar for about 10-15 minutes. Ask for guidance from your therapist in doing this.

### Compression

This also helps in preventing excessive scar formation and helps to flatten the scar as well. Wrapping the scar area in something tight can keep the tissue build-up at an adequate level. This can be achieved using compression garments.

### Silicone

Silicone is a gel like material used to soften scars. It is said to reduce redness, pain, elasticity, elevation and itchiness of scars.

**Caution:** Silicone gel cannot be applied to open wounds, blisters or broken down scars. Some patients also develop an allergic reaction towards silicone.

### Exercises

Exercises given by the therapist will assist in encouraging gliding of the underlying structures that might adhere/stick down due to the scar tissues.

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

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