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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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## Scar management *(1 of 2)*

Scarring is an essential part of the wound healing process that happens after surgery, burns, or trauma, as the body attempts to restore the skin barrier. Initially, your scar might become dry and itchy – this is normal.

Scars take many months to mature. Commonly, they mature into flat and pale scars, however sometimes they can become thick, raised, red, and/or lumpy. Scar tissue can also thicken underneath your scar line and stick to underlying tissues causing difficulty with movement.

Your scar can be improved in the following ways:

### **Moisturisation and massage**

Once your wound has fully healed and you have a newly formed scar, the first thing you can do is moisturise your scar in order to keep it hydrated and prevent skin breakdown. You should wash the area with warm water beforehand and ensure it is dried thoroughly.

You should use a simple, non-perfumed moisturiser. It is better to use cream from a tube rather than a jar as it more hygienic.

With your thumb, gently massage the moisturiser into the scarred area in small circular movements. This can help to loosen the scar tissue and make the skin more supple. If the scar is becoming firm you can gradually increase the pressure you use. You can do this for five minutes up to 2-3 times a day. You may need to continue this for several months.

It is very important that the skin is cleansed between moisturising as a build-up of cream can cause skin irritation.

If you are unable to reach the area yourself, you can ask someone to help you do this for you.

### **Sun protection**

It is important to use a high factor sunblock and cover the affected area with clothing for the next two years.

### **Other treatments**

Your therapist may use other methods to help improve your scar. This might include:

- Silicone putty, gel, or sheeting
- \* Silicone treatments are commonly used to improve the look of young scars. They work by locking in any moisture which in turn helps to soften and smooth raised or lumpy scars.

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**Tel: 01722 345530**

- Pressure garments
  - \* These are specialised, tight-fitting garments which put pressure on scars. They can be used to reduce the thickness of your scars.
- Exercises and splinting
  - \* Your therapist may teach you specific exercises to improve movement that has been restricted by your scar. You may also have bespoke splinting to ensure your scar is held at length and doesn't tighten.

## Questions?

If you have any problems or questions related to your finger or hand please contact a member of the Plastic Out-patients Dressing Clinic or Plastics Out-patients Physiotherapy Department.

Contact numbers:

Plastic Out-patients Dressing Clinic

01722 336262 ext. 3254

Hand Therapy

01722 345530

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