

SCAR CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Scarring is an inevitable outcome of any surgery no matter how minor. Typically, scars take one year to heal completely. Scar strength begins to increase at 4-5 days and peaks at 60 days. During healing the scar may appear red and raised. This will subside over the course of a year with proper scar care and treatment. Factors that aid in scar healing include: proper nutrition, avoidance of sun exposure and infection prevention. Genetic factors influence scar appearance as well. If you scar poorly, your child may as well.

Recommendations for proper scar care:

- 1) **SUNSCREEN** is very important to help to reduce scarring and darkening of the tissue. The type of sunscreen you choose is important. Find one that is at least SPF 35 and contains protection against both UVA and UVB rays. We recommend that all patients put sunscreen on the scar when outside for **at least 1 year** after surgery.
 - A new scar is more fragile than the surrounding skin and will react differently to the sun than the surrounding skin.
 - If you don't use sunscreen, the scar tissue may become darker than surrounding skin and will remain darker than the other skin.
 - After one year, the scar and surrounding skin should react equally to sun.
- 2) **SCAR MASSAGE** will work to soften the fibrous/hard tissue underlying a scar. This will aid in softening the scar and flatten it to make it more level with the surrounding skin.
 - Rub in a circular motion on and around the scar with firm, even pressure for 5 minutes four times per day. You may use scar massage when applying sunscreen to affected area.
 - You can start scar massage once incision is strong enough to handle the pressure (usually 14 days post-operatively).
 - Use lotion or sunscreen to do the scar massage to allow easy motion over the scar and prevent friction.
- 3) **SILICONE SHEETING** will help to reduce redness and may help to prevent keloids or hypertrophic scars. Silicone can come in various forms (sheets, gels, pads) and can be purchased over-the-counter at your local pharmacy or online. If using a sheet, cut a square large enough to cover the scar and place directly on the scar. Sheets must be worn for a minimum of 12 hours daily, but the more they are worn the more they will help.
- 4) **SCAR PRODUCTS** are numerous and they can improve quality of the scar. However, no one product is 100% effective. Please ask us if you have any questions about specific products you want to use. Despite all of the measures taken to optimize scarring, you can still end up with a "bad" scar. Please contact us to inquire about various scar treatment options.