

Postoperative Scar Care

If your scar is on your face:

- Your sutures will be removed at 5-7 days.
- Keep the micropore tape on your scar for 2 weeks, changing weekly. The tape can be washed over and pat dry daily.
- Massage your scar at least 6 times a day over the tape. (Massage with your thumb or finger in a rotatory motion along the scar for two minutes; concentrate on the more bulky and lumpy areas).
- After two weeks, apply silicone tape to your scar, this can be washed over and pat dry. If the tape starts to peel, remove the tape, wash the tape soap and reapply to the scar.
- Alternatively, instead of the silicone tape, you can use silicone gel (Kelocote, or Dermatrix which can be bought over the counter from your local chemist) – smear along your scar twice a day and massage over the gel six times a day as above.
- Silicone should be used for at least 8 weeks and up to 12 weeks to achieve its maximal benefit.

If your scar is on your body:

- Your sutures will be trimmed at 7-10 days; these sutures are under the skin and are dissolvable.
- The wounds are at their weakest at 2-4 weeks (when the wound has only 60-70% normal skin strength and the sutures have started to dissolve – thus losing their strength). This is the period when the wound is most vulnerable to dehiscence (breaking apart). It is important that no excessive force or tension is applied to the edges of the wound and that the white fixomil/hypafix tape is worn on the wound for a minimum of four weeks. The white tape should be left intact, washed over and pat dry daily. Sometimes, a hairdryer on a cool setting can be used to help it dry after a shower. The tape can be changed weekly.
- Regular massages should be applied to the scar over the tape, as described above.
- After 4 weeks, silicone tape or silicone gel can be used for a further 3 months to optimise the colour and lumpiness of the scar.

Sun Protection is essential for your scars. Cover up with clothing or hat, and use sunscreen containing the essential ingredients: titanium oxide or zinc oxide. Our nurses will be able to recommend a sunscreen for you if you are unsure.

Scars need time to settle. A scar can take up to 12 months to 'mature'. Often its appearance during the first 3-6 months is not indicative of how it will look like permanently. However, some scars can show aberrant growth patterns, and these need to be treated promptly to prevent worsening of the scar.

If your scar is not improving, or becoming increasingly thickened and lumpy after 8 weeks, or you are unhappy with your scar, please make an appointment to see Dr Vrtik to see if further treatment is required. If you would like to find out more about scars, please visit Dr Vrtik's website at www.drililyvrtik.com.au and click on the scar sections under the headings 'Skin' and 'Patient Resources'.

Contact Telephone Numbers:

During Office Hours and Non-Urgent Matters – 3353 6165

After hours and for Emergencies only – 0421739149

