



**West Hertfordshire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust



A guide to...

SCAR MANAGEMENT

Patient Information

Watford General Hospital
Hemel Hempstead Hospital
St Albans City Hospital
West Hertfordshire Therapy Unit

After an injury and/or surgery, it is normal for a scar to develop. Scars are formed from fibrous tissue and they are a natural part of the body's healing process. Most of them will fade and become paler over time however they may not completely disappear. The process of scar healing can take up to two years.

Most wounds will be dressed before you leave hospital. If advised that you can remove the dressing, most wounds/ stitches can be gently cleaned using water once you are discharged home. Your wound care may then be continued in outpatients where your wound will be assessed and further information given to you.

You can carry out treatments to help improve the scar's appearance and prevent the formation of further scar tissue that sticks to underlying structures. This will help prevent restrictions in joint range of movement, puckering of the scar, and keep the skin's ability to move freely. If the scar is too painful or sensitive to touch, you can massage away from the area and then work towards the sensitive area. It may take months to achieve a flat, non-sensitive scar site.

What do I need?

- Non-perfumed/fragranced cream (e.g. E45, Nivea) or bio-oil.

What do I need to do?

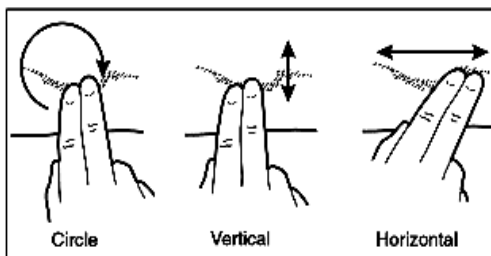
- Once the wound has healed, with no openings, you can begin by applying a small amount of the cream/oil to the area around the scar and begin by gently massaging around the edge. This begins to desensitise the area so that it is less tingly/painful.

What do I need to do?

- Once the wound has healed, with no openings, you can begin by applying a small amount of the cream/oil to the area around the scar and begin by gently massaging around the edge. This begins to desensitise the area so that it is less tingly/painful.
- Then, if comfortable, move onto the site of the scar. Using two fingers/ a thumb, massage up and down the scar and at a right angle to the scar. Start with a gentle pressure and slowly increase if tolerated.
- If these movements are comfortable, a more vigorous massage (deeper and firmer) can be applied in small circles with two fingers or your thumb around the scar (not along the scar). This helps prevent the scar tissue sticking to the underlying structures. This can be done in a clockwise and anticlockwise motion.

How often should I do this?

- Gently massage the scar for two to three minutes, two to three times a day.
- Aim to massage the area around the scar site more vigorously for two to five minutes, two to three times a day.
- The massage should be pain free. If you experience pain then reduce the pressure and focus on the area around the scar to begin with.



If you are unsure about any advice or information, please arrange to contact fracture clinic or contact the Physiotherapy department using the below contact details.

West Hertfordshire Therapy Unit
Jacketts Field
WD5 0PA

Tel: 01923 378130
Email: westherts.opphysioadvice@nhs.net

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217187** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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