

Scar Massage with Children

This leaflet explains more about how to look after your child's scars once dressings have been removed. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Why will my child have a scar?

When your child's skin is damaged from an operation or an accident, a scar will be left. How visible the scar will be can vary from person to person.

Will the scar fade?

After all dressings have been removed from your child's wound, the scar will begin to remodel to look more like the surrounding skin and will get back to normal strength. During the first six to eight weeks of this stage the scar produces a lot of collagen which can make the scar red, raised and feel firm. Over the next few months, this will settle down and the scar should start to soften, flatten and fade.

About 12-18 months after your child's wound has healed the scar will become fully mature and should appear flatter and closer to their usual skin tone.

How often should I massage my child's scar and for how long?

Scar massage can be started as soon as the wound is healed. Massage gently to begin with and then increase the pressure so you blanch or lighten the scar.

Massage your child's scar _____ times a day, for _____ minutes each time. The time needed will depend on the size of the scar - a bigger scar may take longer. The scar and surrounding skin should be gently washed before you massage it to remove any cream left on the skin from the last massage.

Looking after my child's scar

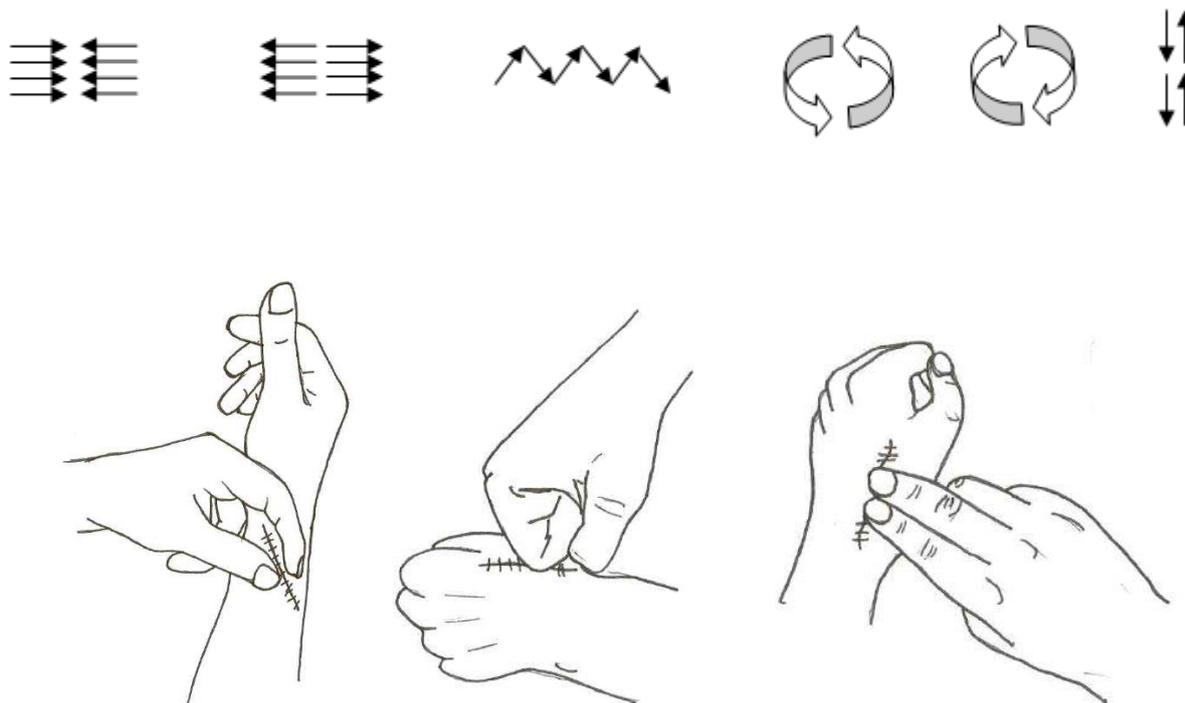
Scarred skin often can't make oil or sweat in the same way as uninjured skin which may make it become thick, lumpy, dry and itchy.

At around two weeks (or starting earlier in some cases) when the wound is closed and dry, your therapist will encourage you to begin gentle scar massage.

It is important to massage the scar every day to help to soften it and improve its appearance. As the scar matures, gradually increase the firmness of scar massage to make the scar go lighter (blanch). You should carry on massaging the scars for at least three to six months after your child's surgery / injury.

Massage the scar in a variety of directions as shown below. Use a non-perfumed, water based moisturising cream such as E45 cream, Diprobase or Aqueous cream.

Using your child's unaffected hand or the parent / guardian's hand, you can massage the scar with the finger tips, knuckles or pinching it and pulling it in a variety of directions:



What else should I do to help my child's scar?

Direct sunlight can be harmful to your child's young skin and is best avoided. Scars are especially sensitive and burn easily in the sun. If your child's scar is exposed to the sun or allowed to get sun burnt, it may stay redder for longer and not fade properly.

ALWAYS use a SPF 30 sunscreen or greater with UVA / UVB coverage on the scar. Do this for at least two years on your child's scar. Try to keep the area covered in direct sunlight as well.

Useful sources of information

Sun smart www.cancerresearchuk.org for sun advice

NHS Choices <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scars/> for scar advice

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding the information provided in this leaflet, please feel free to discuss them with your therapist at your next appointment. For more urgent queries the team can be contacted on the **treatment enquiries** phone number listed below.

Your therapist's name is _____.

Treatment enquiries: 020 8725 1038 (answer phone only)

Dragon Centre Reception: 020 8725 5292

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer). **Tel:** 020 8725 2453
Email: pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

NHS 111 You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

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