

# Silicone for Scars

**This leaflet explains more about using medical grade silicone on scars, including the benefits, risks, any alternatives and what to expect when you come to hospital.**

**If you have any further questions, please speak to the therapist caring for you.**

## Why is silicone used for scars?

Silicone can work well combined with treatments such as pressure, scar massage and other therapeutic methods in reducing the appearance of problematic scars.

Silicone may hydrate the scar tissue and reduce the production of collagen fibres (see scar massage information sheet).

It has also been shown to reduce redness and to make the scar flatter, softer and paler.

## How do I use the silicon?

Your therapist will give you instructions for how to use the silicone.

There are many forms of silicone, from a gel to a type of dressing. Most silicone products are reusable and should not be thrown away. You can get some products on prescription from your GP.

Your therapist will tell you which product will be best to help your scar.

You may be advised to wear the silicone as much as possible during a 24 hour period, to help it to work fully. You will be given the first silicone product and after this you may need to buy your own.

Silicone should only be applied to clean, dry skin and not on open or weeping wounds.

## What types of silicone are there?

### **Topical Gel**

Apply a thin layer of topical gel directly to clean, dry skin during scar massage.

The gel dries in three - five minutes making a waterproof barrier which lasts for six to eight hours.

You may put on other creams, such as sun cream or make-up over the area once the gel is dried.

Do not use topical silicone gel on open or weeping wounds.

### **Mepiform dressings**

Cut the Mepiform dressing to the size you need, peel off the backing and apply directly to clean, dry skin free from any residue from moisturiser/ointment.

Mepiform is NOT reusable so a new dressing should be applied each time after cleaning and massaging the scar. You should follow your therapist's instructions.

This dressing can be worn continuously for three to seven days.

The dressing is waterproof and does not need to be removed for bathing.

### **Silicone gel sheeting**

The gel sheeting is reusable and should only be used on clean, dry, healed skin. Remove the plastic backing from the gel sheet and put the sticky side over the scar. The sheet should be held in place with a pressure garment, Tubigrip or surgical tape.

The gel sheet should be washed with warm soapy water after taking it off. Pat the sheet dry with a clean towel and wrap it in cling film. If looked after properly, the gel sheet should last for six to eight weeks. The silicone is still working even if the sheet no longer sticks to the skin.

### **Mineral oil fabric digital sleeve**

This is a fabric sleeve designed for use on finger scars for compression and to deliver a mineral oil. It is not silicone but acts in much the same way.

It is reusable and should be washed with warm soapy water. Pat the sleeve dry with a clean towel or allow to air dry. Lightly dust the product with talcum powder after drying.

Do not use on open wounds.

## **How long should I wear the dressing for?**

Your therapist will give you detailed instructions on how long to wear your silicone.

Generally it will either be:

All the time

At night only

Most of the time: **remove** daily for: \_\_\_\_\_ hours.

Most of the products are reusable and will continue to work for six to eight weeks.

You may need to carry on using silicone for several months, depending on how quickly your scars respond to the treatment. Your therapist will continue to assess you and give advice.

## Is there anything I need to look out for?

People sometimes have a reaction to silicone products. If you notice any redness, remove the silicone and wash the area with cold water.

Do not put the silicone back on and let your therapist know as soon as possible.

## Useful sources of information

NHS Treatment

[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Scars/Pages/Treatment](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Scars/Pages/Treatment)



## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about using silicone for scars please contact the hand therapy team anytime on 020 8725 1038, leave a message, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible (this may be the next working day). For appointment enquiries please phone 020 8725 0007.

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://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 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto: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](http://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

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.