

Pressure garment prescription for scar management

This leaflet explains more about wearing a pressure garment, including the benefits of using a pressure garment and how to care for it. If you have any further questions, please speak to your therapist.

Why do I need a pressure garment?

A scar is a natural part of the healing process following an injury to the skin. Most scars are flat and pale and leave minimal trace of an injury on the skin. However, if a wound has taken a long time to heal or you have had to have skin grafts or a muscle flap then you are more at risk of developing *hypertrophic* scarring.

Hypertrophic scarring is caused by an overproduction of collagen fibres in the skin as part of the healing process. The collagen fibres become red and lumpy and rather than laying themselves down in straight lines, they can develop into lumps and bumps, which can cause the skin to become tight and raised. The redness in the scars is the result of new blood vessels being formed.

Pressure garments may help control the formation of collagen fibres and keep the scar flat and supple. This can lead to a softer, paler and flatter scar.

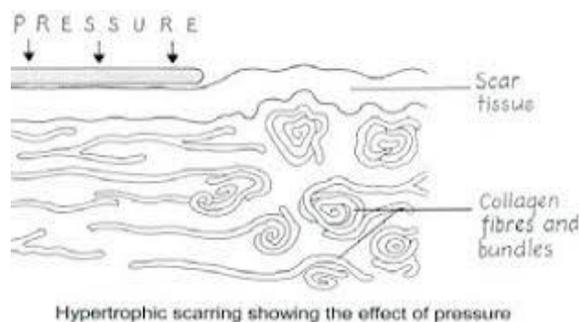
Pressure garments need to be used anywhere between six months to two years, depending on the type of surgery you have had, and how quickly the scar tissue matures.

How do I obtain a pressure garment?

If your therapist feels that a pressure garment may help, they will take the measurements for the garment and prescribe the right design for your needs. The garment will then be made by an external company called Jobskin.

To get the best result, the pressure garment will need to be worn as much as possible during a 24 hour period. All patients will get two pressure garments; one to wear and one to wash.

Pressure garments usually last somewhere between four and six months before a replacement is needed. If, after a clinical assessment, you need another garment **within six months** of receiving your first garments, the hospital will provide you with **one** additional garment.



Any additional pressure garments required beyond six months after you were given your first two garments **will need to be paid for directly by you as the patient**. Your therapist can assist with the ordering of the garment; details on payment can be found further on in this leaflet.

If, at any stage, you require further surgery relating to your original injury and further pressure garments are needed, these will be funded again by the hospital for up to six months after that surgery.

How do I pay for my pressure garment?

If you are going to be paying for your garment directly, your therapist can assist with taking new measurements (if required) and with placing an order with Jobskin.

In order to complete the payment, you will need to contact the office directly – their local free call number is: **0870 240 3963**. Jobskin website: www.jobskin.co.uk

The company will usually facilitate a credit or debit card payment; however there is also a facility to pay by cheque if required.

If you are not able to contact Jobskin directly, your therapist can provide your contact details to Jobskin (with your permission) and they will contact you to arrange payment.

How do I care for my pressure garment?

In order to prolong the wear of your garment, it is advised that you follow the care instructions provided with the pressure garment. Additional information on the care of your pressure garment is outlined below:

- The pressure garment needs to be worn full time as directed by your therapist. It should only be removed for skin hygiene and moisturising.
- The pressure garment should be washed every day:
 - Hand wash OR machine wash up to 40°C with a mild detergent.
 - Roll in a towel to dry out excess moisture.
 - Leave in an airing cupboard or over a clothes horse to dry.
 - DO NOT tumble dry your garment, dry your garment over a radiator or dry clean your garment.
- Pressure garments do not protect you from the sun therefore you will still need to wear sun block over your scar area for extra protection.
- You will need to continue with moisturising and massage of your scar area as directed by your therapist.

How will I know if I need a new pressure garment?

Your therapist will monitor the fit of your pressure garments on a regular basis and will take new measurements as needed.

Your therapist will also monitor your scar, skin graft or muscle flap and will discuss any need for you to continue to wear a pressure garment.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your pressure garment, please discuss these with your therapist.

Therapist: _____

Treatment Enquires: 020 8725 1038 (answer phone only)

Appointment Enquires: 020 8725 0007



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 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

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

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

