

Scar Massage

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 is varies 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 to get back to normal strength.

During the first four to six weeks of this stage the scar is fragile and might open up with what appears to be little trauma to the area. The skin is also producing 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 and fade.

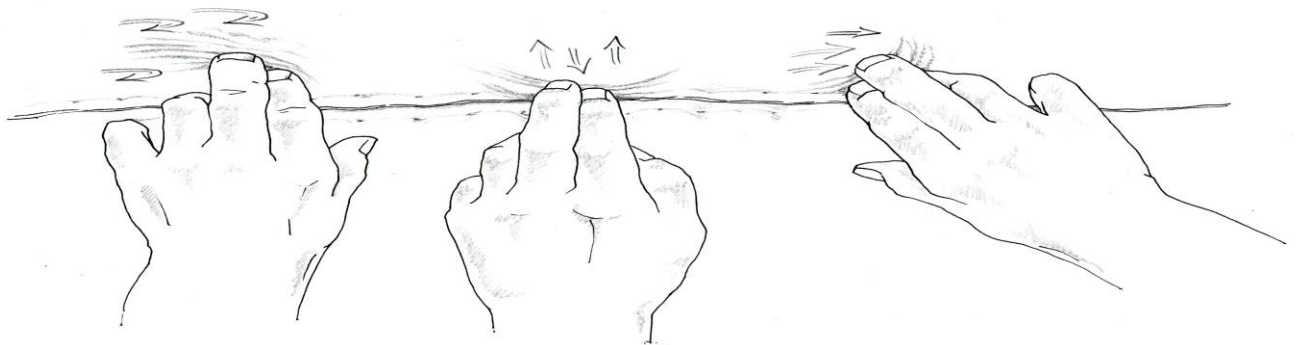
About 12-18 months after your child's wound has healed, the scar will become fully mature and should become flatter, paler and softer.

Looking after my child's scar

Scarred skin often can't make oil or sweat which may make it become thick, lumpy, dry and itchy. It is important to massage the scar every day to help to soften it, to prevent skin breakdown and improve appearance.

Massage the scar with circular movements and also in movements straight across the scar. Use a non-perfumed moisturising cream such as E45 cream.

Start gently to begin with until your child gets used to the massage. As soon as possible start applying enough pressure to make the scar go lighter (blanch).



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 your child's scar two or three times a day, for one to two minutes each time. The time needed will depend on the size of the scar - a bigger scar may take longer.

Start to massage your child's scar as soon as possible and carry on for as long as possible. Scars take 12 to 18 months to fully mature and the longer you carry out scar massage the better.

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.

Massage gently to begin with then increase the pressure so you blanch or lighten the scar.

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. Use total block sunscreen for at least two years on your child's scar (minimum SPF 30) and try to keep the area covered in direct sunlight as well.

Useful sources of information

Sun Smart www.cancerresearchuk.org

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's scar, please contact the plastic surgery department on 020 8725 1134 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm).

You can also contact the paediatric plastic surgery clinical nurse specialist on 020 8725 2656 and leave a message on the answerphone.

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.



Reference: PLS_PSM_03 **Published:** April 2021 **Review date:** April 2023