

Keloid Scars in Paediatrics

This leaflet provides information on keloid scars and the treatment options. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your child.

What are keloid scars?

Following damage to the skin after surgery, a piercing or chicken pox for example, the skin heals by forming scar tissue. These scars usually flatten and fade over time but sometimes the scar can get thick and raised and spread beyond the original area of skin damage. This is called a keloid scar.

What causes keloid scars?

We don't really know why some people develop keloid scars and others don't. They can affect anyone but are more common in certain ethnic groups, people of African, Asian or Hispanic descent.

They are not genetically linked but they can run in families.

What are the symptoms of keloid scars?

Keloid scars are usually firm, raised and smooth and, as they grow, they can be itchy and painful. The pain is usually because of the stretching of the skin. If the keloid is near a joint, movement can be restricted. A keloid may continue to grow for months or even years.

Where can keloid scars develop?

They can develop anywhere but more commonly affect:

- Shoulders
- Chest
- Upper arms
- Earlobes – especially after piercing.

How are keloid scars diagnosed?

They are usually diagnosed clinically, and no special test is required. If there is an uncertainty over the diagnosis, then it may be suggested to take a biopsy of the skin to confirm.

What are the treatment options for keloid scars?

There is no cure for keloids.

Surgical removal is usually not recommended as often the keloid will regrow and may come back bigger than the original one.

There are treatment options to help the symptoms of the keloid which can be administered in the clinic setting if your child is able to tolerate it.

An intralesional (into the keloid scar) steroid is injected into the scar. The aim of this is to reduce the pain and itch and help soften the scar. These can be administered in the clinic setting every 6-8 weeks.

For younger children who won't tolerate an injection in clinic, this treatment will require a day case admission for the injection to be given under general anaesthetic.

If the surgeon feels excision (surgical removal) is an option for your child's keloid scar, they will discuss this with you. This is usually carried out as a day case procedure and is under general anaesthetic (your child will be asleep). Once the keloid is removed, a steroid is often injected to the new scar at the end of the procedure to try to prevent the keloid regrowing but this is no guarantee.

Asking for your consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your child's care. For some treatments, you will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you agree for your child to have the treatment and understand what it involves. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

What are the risks of the injection?

The intralesional steroid injections can be painful when administered but this should settle soon afterwards. There is a small risk of infection and there may be some bruising and swelling to the area in the initial period after treatment.

Longer term risks following multiple injections.

- Hypopigmentation – lighter patches of skin colour
- Hyperpigmentation – darker patches of skin colour
- Telangiectasia – spidery like blood vessels in the skin
- Thinning of the skin
- Indentation of the keloid
- Necrosis of the skin – damage to the skin caused by the injection which may result in a wound that requires dressings - this is very rare.

What happens after the procedure?

A small plaster or simple dressing will be applied over the area, this can be removed in an hour or two at home. It is acceptable to wash and clean the area normally and return to normal activities. Depending on the location of your child's keloid, you may be advised to continue with scar massage or try clip-on earrings to apply gentle pressure to the area.

Will my child have a follow-up appointment?

Your child will often require a series of injection to see the benefits from this treatment. The interval of injections will be every 6-8 weeks. This may be longer if the skin over the keloid is showing signs of thinning or hypopigmentation or if the keloid has responded well to the treatment.

How can I prevent further keloid scars?

Avoiding unnecessary trauma to the skin, e.g. avoiding piercings and tattoos forever is the best way to prevent avoidable keloid scars.

Useful sources of information

British Associate of Dermatologists

[Home Page - British Association of Dermatologists \(bad.org.uk\)](http://bad.org.uk)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Plastic Surgery Department on 020 8725 1134 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours, please contact the on-call plastic surgery SHO (Senior House Officer) via the hospital switchboard on 020 8672 1255.

You can also contact the paediatric plastic surgery clinical nurse specialist on 020 8725 2656 and leave a message on the answering machine. If your query or concern is urgent, please don't leave a message but contact the on-call plastic surgery SHO via the hospital switchboard as above on 020 8672 1255.

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 advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

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 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.



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