

Discharge from the Plastic Dressing Clinic

This leaflet explains how to look after your scar or wound now that you have been discharged from the care of the Plastic Dressing Clinic (PDC). These are general guidelines and we will discuss your individual circumstances with you. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Looking after my wound

If your wound has not fully healed, the dressings are to continue with:

(Clinic nurse to tick as appropriate)

- Your GP practice nurse
- Community nurses
- Nearest “walk in” or “urgent care centre”
- By the patient or their relative as agreed in clinic.

If your sutures are dissolvable, they do not need to be removed. Most dissolvable stitches start to break down within one to two weeks, though it may take several months for them to disappear completely. Sometimes part of the stitch will be left on the outside of your skin. This should come away over time but, if it causes irritation, ask your local nurse to trim it for you.

If your sutures are not dissolvable, they will usually be removed 7 to 14 days after your surgery and we will tell you when you should get this done. You may wish to take some pain relief prior to your suture removal appointment as this can sometimes be uncomfortable.

Looking after my scar

When your wound is fully healed, the scar may appear red and raised. This is perfectly normal at this stage of recovery. Your scar will change over time and may take up to two years to fully mature.

For a softer, less noticeable scar, massage and moisturise the area using a simple moisturiser that you use on your skin. If moisturising is new to you, suitable products include E45 cream or Vaseline Intensive Care cream. Do this twice daily for at least a minute but up to five minutes each time if you can.

New scars are very sensitive to sunlight so you must keep the area out of the sun. Direct sunlight may burn the area causing a more noticeable scar. You are advised to protect your scar using Sun Protection Factor of at least 30 and a cream that has UVA protection.

When can I get back to normal activities?

Returning to normal activities is individual. The nurse will have discussed this with you before being discharged from the plastic dressing clinic.

What should I do if I have a problem?

If your wound has not completely healed, please check your wound regularly for signs of infection or wound deterioration, such as redness, swelling, increasing pain, pus, increasing warmth or if your wound opens or becomes larger.

If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your GP, PDC using the details below or go to St George's Emergency Department (ED or A&E).

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

Not all patients need a routine follow up and the nurse will confirm this with you when you are being discharged from the PDC.

If you are expecting to be seen and you have not been notified about your follow-up within one week of your discharge from the PDC, please call 020 8725 0007 or contact your consultant's secretary via 020 8672 1255 and ask for the secretary of the consultant looking after you. The email address is

Plastic.Secretaries@stgeorges.nhs.uk

For patients originally seen in the Outpatient Clinic at a hospital other than

St. George's Hospital please contact the Plastic Surgery secretary at the hospital where you were first seen. The following hospitals must be contacted directly by the patient for a follow up appointment as the outpatient team at St. George's Hospital is unable to arrange this on your behalf.

- **Ashford and St. Peter's Hospital**
- **Croydon University Hospital**
- **Haslemere Hospital**
- **Kingston Hospital**
- **Royal Surrey County Hospital**
- **St. Helier Hospital**

Useful sources of information

Scar massage

<https://www.britishskinfoundation.org.uk/blog/the-benefits-of-scar-massage>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your wound, dressings or scar , please contact the **Plastic Dressing Clinic nurses on 020 8725 0473** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm – answering machine only. Please leave your name, telephone number and hospital number, if known, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible). Alternatively, you can email the team on

stgh-tr.plasticdressingclinic@nhs.net

Please note response to voicemail and emails may take several days.

For out of hours and urgent advice please contact NHS 111.

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 wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS 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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