



# SCAR MANAGEMENT

## Patient information factsheet

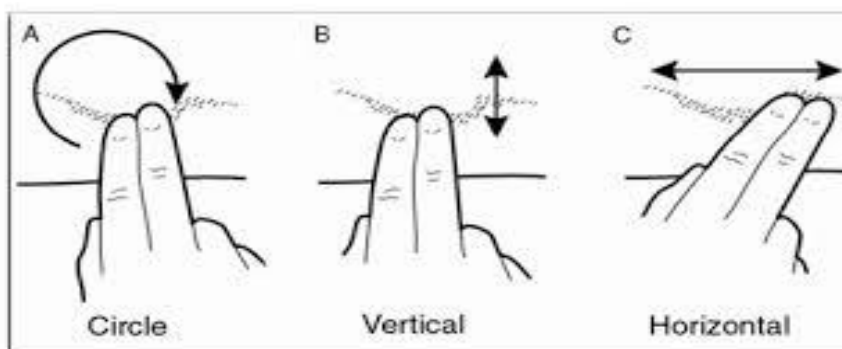
### What are scars?

- Scars are part of the natural healing process of the skin.
- Scar tissue usually starts to form within the first two weeks.
- Sometimes, as a scar forms, it becomes hard, red, raised, and thick. It might itch, feel numb or be sensitive to the touch.
- Scars close to a joint (wrist, knee, elbow) might make movement difficult.
- Your scar changes the most in the first three months, but can continue to change for about twelve to eighteen months.

### Scar massage can help with the following issues

- itchiness or over-sensitivity of scars
  - softening your scar if you use moisturising cream
  - improving the flexibility and movement of scars
  - making collagen (a protein in the body) form more evenly, by applying pressure.
- You should start massaging your scars when your wounds are fully closed, and after your stitches are removed or have dissolved.
  - Use an unperfumed moisturising cream or lotion (E45, Nivea, Vaseline Intensive Care cream).
  - For 3-5 minutes, massage the scar and any tight or hard areas close to the scar.
  - For best results, you should massage 2-3 times a day.
  - It may take several months to get a flat, movable scar.
  - You can also purchase a battery operated, mini hand scar massager, or use a manual technique, as shown on the next page:





1. Start with small circles along the length of the scar, either with your thumb or first two fingers. Use firm and even pressure when massaging your scar. To start with, this may be uncomfortable, so increase the pressure gradually to help soothe the scar.
2. Next, work horizontally across the scar – back and forth in small movements.
3. Then, work vertically across the scar- up and down in small movements.
4. If someone else is helping you to massage the scar for steps 2 and 3, they can use both hands working in opposite directions.
5. You may be given a piece of non-slip matting to massage your scar. This should not be used with any cream and your therapist will show you how to use it.

## Silicone Gel

- Sometimes patients use silicone gel on their scar/s, which helps moisturise and improve its appearance, once it is fully healed.
- You can purchase silicone gel sheets or silicone cream from a pharmacy, without a prescription.
- If you are seeing a hand therapist, they may issue some silicone gel if it is needed.
- For the first two days of treatment with this gel, you should wear it for four hours in a row.
- After this, it should be worn for approximately eight hours per day or night.
- After wearing the gel, please wash with a mild soap and reattach to the backing paper.
- Your gel should last up to six weeks.
- If you have any concerns about your scar, please contact your Doctor or Therapist.



For further information and advice please look at the following website:

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

### **Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)**

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email [whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net). We will try our best to meet your needs.

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**Whittington Health NHS Trust**  
Magdala Avenue  
London  
N19 5NF  
Phone: 020 7272 3070  
[www.whittington.nhs.uk](http://www.whittington.nhs.uk)

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