

POST OPERATIVE CARE

DRESSING

Following your surgical procedure a dressing may have been applied to your wound. The surgeon decides on the care of wounds specifically for each patient. You will be instructed to either:

- Leave this dressing dry and intact until your next appointment or;
- Remove this dressing 24 to 48 hours following your surgical procedure. This could be referring to the removal of the top layers of dressing down to a white tape or removal of all bandages, exposing the suture line where you will be asked to apply Vaseline or a prescribed ointment to the wound 2 to 3 times daily.

PAIN

Once the anaesthetic agents have worn off, a certain amount of discomfort and pain is expected. This can vary according to the site and size of the operation and the individual patient. Unless other analgesia has been prescribed to you by your plastic surgeon, simple analgesic such as panadeine or panadol can be taken regularly (4 to 6 hourly) and would be anticipated to be adequate.

SCARRING

Scarring occurs as a result of all surgical wound. After your wound has healed you might notice changes in the scar appearance and texture. This is a result of you scar remoulding and maturing. Scar tissue remoulding occurs over months (even years). Over the next few months you may notice your scar going through a 'red lumpy' phase which is sometimes referred to as the vascular stage of scar maturation. This generally builds up over an approximate 6 week period and then should gradually improve there after.

Sun exposure to the scar should always be avoided as this can cause more pigmentation to the scar. Sun protection is always advised including the use of a good quality sun block with a high SP factor (eg SPF 30). You will be advised when to commence sun care treatment at your follow up visit.

Scar treatment post operatively will usually involve either strapping the scar with a tape such as mefix, steristrip or micropore or scar massage. You will be advised on the most appropriate treatment after your first post operative appointment.

SCAR MASSAGE

Scar massage promotes collagen remodelling by applying pressure to the scars, helps reduce itching and provides moisture and pliability to scar areas.

Once your sutures have been removed you should start gently and increase the pressure, strength and frequency as the scar matures and as tolerated. This can be done with any preferred moisturising cream (eg vitamin E oil, Bio oil or sorbolene)

Start with a couple minutes on each scar twice daily and this can be increased to 3 to 4 times daily as feasible. Generally the massage should be in small circle along the scar with more time being spent on ropey or thick areas.

Please contact the Western Australian Plastic Surgery Centre if:

- You have more swelling and redness in or around your wound;
- You have muscle, joint or body aches, sweating, chills, or a fever;
- You have pain that worsens or does not go away even after taking your pain medicine;
- You have pus or a foul odour coming from your wound;
- Your bandage becomes soaked with blood;