Scar Therapy

This information is for patients who want to do whatever possible to ensure that a scar will heal as well as possible. It is intended for patients who have a scar that is early in the healing period. If your scar is already six months old or older, most of the points in this handout will not be very effective in improving your scar, and you will want to discuss this with your doctor.

The appearance of a scar is dependent on many factors. One of the most important is the type of skin you have. If you have a history of forming thick or raised, red scars, you may be someone whose skin tends to always form more scar tissue. In general, people with very light skin tend to form less scar tissue than people with darker skin types, and older people also form less scar tissue than younger people. We do not understand why this is. Much research is being done on wound healing and we will get better over time at dealing with scars. Scar formation is also related to where the scar is located. Thicker skin will usually form a worse scar than thin skin, e.g. skin on one’s back forms thicker scars than skin on one’s eyelids. The type of wound also plays a role. If there is a lot of tension on the wound or if it gets infected, it may form more scar tissue. Once you have a scar, you can never completely remove it, but in many cases it can be made to look better. If your scar is not satisfactory after an adequate period of healing (usually at least six months) you should discuss this with your doctor. The following will help you achieve the best results possible for your particular situation.

1. Avoid exposing the wound to sunlight until it is completely healed (i.e. is not red anymore), as sun exposure will cause it to become more red and may lead to a thicker scar. A high SPF sunscreen (50+) should be applied if sun exposure is anticipated.

2. Applying a silicone dressing such as Scarguard™, or any variety of silicone sheet “Scar Treatment” bandage (available at most drugstores) at night will help many scars flatten out and soften. Silicone sheets can be purchased at any local pharmacy, grocery store, Walmart, etc. They can also be purchased online, and I recommend Epi-Derm from Biodermis.com. These sheets are self-adhesive and easy to use. There are also liquid silicone gels that can be worn during the day if you wish.

3. Massaging the scar with Vitamin E Oil, Mederma™, or other lotions can help soften the scar.

4. For some scars that are tending to thicken, your doctor may suggest an injection of a medication such as Kenalog™ into the scar.

5. For scars that remain very red after several months, treatment with a laser may reduce the redness in some cases. This is not necessary for most scars as the redness is normal and will fade with time.

6. Patience is truly a virtue when it comes to dealing with scars as almost all scars will improve with time.

For Questions or Emergency Care:
Call the office at 601-984-5160. You may need to speak with the doctor on-call.