

INCISION/SCAR CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Incision, Scar and Wound Information Sheet

How do I care for my incision?

If your incision was covered by a dressing, paper tape, or a compression garment (typically on the breast or body), leave it covered until your follow-up visit.

If your incision was left uncovered (typically on the face), use a cotton tipped applicator (Q-tip) to apply a thin layer of Vaseline ointment to the incision 3 times a day for 3 days only. While antibiotic ointment may also be used, sometimes an allergic reaction may develop. Unless instructed otherwise, do NOT use Vaseline or antibiotic ointment for more than 3 days.

Unless instructed otherwise, you may take a brief shower with assistance the day after your procedure. Let the water run over the treatment area and do NOT rub it. Gently dab the area with a towel to dry it.

Will I have a scar?

Any injury or surgery on your skin may result in a scar. While most scars improve over time, some scars may become more prominent and cause discomfort. How your skin heals depends on many factors including the location on the body, your age, and genetics.

When will my scar look better?

You may see many changes that occur during the healing process. Within the first ten days there will be little change except that the sutures may come out.

After this time, you may see some redness along the incision line. This is a normal part of healing. The incision may look like this for 2 to 4 months. It may also appear redder and more raised before it looks better. In most cases, scars continue to improve for 1 to 2 years. Most plastic surgeons will wait until that time before considering a scar revision.

What can I do to make my scar look better?

Although there are many products on the market claiming to improve scars, except for silicone based products, there is little evidence that they actually work.

Depending on your procedure, one of three scar care treatment options will be offered.

- For most breast and body procedures, you will have 3M Micropore Paper Tape/Steristrips applied on the incisions 5 to 7 days after the procedure. This will be changed every 1 to 2 weeks or as needed and continued for 3 months. If your skin does not tolerate the paper tape, silicone sheets will be recommended.

- In some cases, silicone sheets will be recommended. These are applied to the incisions 5 to 7 days after the procedure and worn 20 to 24 hours per day. They may be removed during showers and as needed. Each silicone sheet lasts about 1 month.
- For procedures on the face, a silicone ointment will be recommended, along with at least SPF 50 sun block, starting 5 to 7 days after the procedure.

Where can I get the scar treatment products?

There are many sources for these products. Please look at the options below if your physician suggests these products instead of 3M Micropore Paper Tape or if the paper tape is not working for you.

Where can I get the scar treatment products?

There are many sources for these products. Please look at the options below if your physician suggests these products instead of 3M Micropore Paper Tape or if the paper tape is not working for you. Silicone gel can also be used on the face and is usually available at local pharmacies or online.

Remember, these products need to be used daily for at least 3 months. Be sure to read the instructions with each product and discontinue use if you develop any side effects such as skin irritation.

We recommend the following brands: Biocorneum, Silagen, Pro-Sil (stick)

Scar Treatment Instructions (if not using paper tape)

- Massage the scar for 5 minutes, 3 times a day until it is soft and flat. This may take a few months.
- Apply either silicone gel sheeting or silicone ointment as instructed. These products must be used daily for at least 3 months to be effective. If your pharmacy does not carry silicone scar treatment products, you may order them from online sources.

How will my wounds heal if they are not closed with stitches or if there is a small opening in the incision?

Small wounds or openings in the incision will heal within a few weeks. Your physician will see you regularly to make sure healing is progressing.

Unless instructed otherwise, clean the incision and wound with running water in the shower, then apply a thin layer of Vaseline ointment to the open area 3 times per day to prevent it from drying out. Cover with gauze or non-stick dressing (Telfa).

Is sun block important?

Yes, keep your scar away from sun light and use at least SPF 50 sun-block for 1 year after your procedure. Apply the sun-block after applying the silicone ointment.

What should I NOT do?

Do NOT use hydrogen peroxide on a wound or open incision as it interferes with healing.