

Information for patients and carers

Scar Management

Therapy Service



About our service

Our scar management service consists of physiotherapists who will help treat your scar after a burn, wound or plastic surgery. Your appointment/s will consist of one of our physiotherapists assessing your scar and advising you on the most appropriate treatment/s to help you best manage common scar symptoms such as dry skin, itching, tightness, reduced movement, scar discomfort and helping with the look of your scar. If appropriate we may provide:

- Education and advice
- Tailored exercises
- Silicone products
- Pressure garments
- Thermoplastic or soft splints

What causes a scar?

As mentioned above, a scar can be caused by a wound, burn or surgery. Scar formation is part of your body's normal healing process. Occasionally, scars can become raised, hard and thick in nature. They can also be pink, red or generally different to normal skin colour. Scars are individual to each patient and can take up to 12-18 months to mature. The appearance of a scar can be affected by:

- How long the wound takes to heal
- Size and depth of wound
- How much time has passed since your injury
- Infection or additional surgery
- Skin type (e.g. pale or darker natural skin tone)
- General health

Depending on the amount of skin and tissue damage following your injury, you may be left with a permanent visible scar.

How should I treat my scar?

Once the wound is healed and does not require a dressing, it is important to start treating the scar immediately. This gives your scar the best chance of recovery.

We advise that once the wound is healed you massage it 3-4 times daily. We recommend gentle circular motions using non-perfumed moisturising cream for this.

Scars are very sensitive to sunlight and can burn the skin easily. This can cause the scar to darken permanently. We recommend covering the scars and applying a high factor sun cream (SPF 50, UVA, UVB) regularly.

Additional physiotherapy scar treatments

As mentioned earlier, our service can provide you with additional treatment options should they feel it clinically appropriate for you and your scar. They may help improve the condition and appearance of your scar and reduce any symptoms you may be experiencing. If appropriate, your physiotherapist will discuss the following with you, if deemed appropriate:

Silicone products – these can help to hydrate a scar as overproduction of collagen fibres could lead to hypertrophic or keloid scarring. It may also help in the appearance of a scar and help return the skin to its natural tone.

Pressure garments – these can help limit the growth of a scar by exerting constant pressure to it. It may also help to keep collagen fibres flat reducing the risk of raised scars.

Thermoplastic or soft splinting – these can help reduce the risk of joints losing their ability to move, due to tight skin formed by the scar.

Precautions

Do not massage or moisturise your scar if it is not fully healed or the area of skin breaks down. If required, you can contact your physiotherapist using the telephone numbers below. Alternatively, you may need to contact your GP or attend your local medical walk-in centre. Do not apply any silicone, garments or splints until you have been assessed by a healthcare professional.

After a burn, wound or plastic surgery there can be a risk of infection. Common signs and symptoms of infection:

- Swelling
- Redness
- Pain
- Warmth to touch
- Pus or bleeding from wound
- Feeling generally unwell

If you develop these symptoms, please contact the Dressings/Burns management clinic on telephone: **01772 523542**.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Burns and plastics therapy team: **01772 522379**

Physiotherapy main department: **01772 522876**

Additional contact details

Ward 4 at Royal Preston Hospital: **01772 522244**

Dressings/burns management clinic: **01772 523542**

Burns clerk for follow-up burns management clinic: **01772 528188**

Royal Preston Hospital switchboard: **01772 716565**

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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