

# Information for patients and carers

## Mepiform

Scar Management Therapy Service



## Statement

The instructions and advice given by your therapist and in this booklet aim to give you a good outcome, but this cannot be guaranteed. You need to follow instructions carefully, but there will always be a risk of complications which may affect the outcome. Your therapist will explain the risks, benefits and any (or no) alternatives before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any proposed treatment, please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

## Scar healing

Any wound or surgery will cause a scar. A scar is part of your body's normal healing process. Sometimes this healing process causes excessive scar tissue to build up and form red and raised areas. This is called hypertrophic, or keloid, scarring. The scar may also feel stuck down which stops your skin from moving freely. Scar healing can take up to 18 months and may be affected by:

- How much time has passed since your injury
- Infection
- Skin type e.g. pale or dark skin
- Size and/or depth of your wound
- General health

## How does silicone work?

Exactly how silicone gel works is not fully understood. However, most of the research suggests that it works by maintaining moisture (hydration) and preventing the scar from drying out. Silicone gel sheets (Mepiform) can also be effective at preventing hypertrophic and keloid scarring. It can:

- Soften and flatten raised scar tissue
- Reduce itching and redness
- Improve skin flexibility and movement

## When and how should silicone sheets be used?

Your doctor or therapist will discuss the options available and will recommend the use of silicone if appropriate for you. Silicone gel sheets (Mepiform) should only be applied to skin that is completely healed (no open wounds).

- Wash your hands before and after use
- Ensure your scar and the surrounding skin is clean and dry
- Cut the gel sheet to size with an overlap of 1cm to the surrounding skin
- Remove the plastic covering and apply the sticky surface of the gel sheet directly over the scar
- Do not stretch the gel sheet over joints
- You may be instructed and taught how to massage over the gel sheet

### **IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHECK FOR ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS FROM USING SILICONE GEL SHEETS**

On day 1 keep the silicone gel sheet in place for up to 2 hours. Remove and check for any signs of irritation (itching, increased redness, broken skin, a rash or excessive sweating). Unless there are any problems, the gel sheet can be worn continuously (i.e. up to 24 hours a day). It is waterproof and you can shower with it in place. However, it should be removed at least once a day to inspect and clean the skin underneath. Each piece of gel sheet generally lasts for 3-7 days.

If you experience irritation, remove the gel sheet and allow the skin to settle. Once the irritation has disappeared reapply the gel sheet gradually building up therapy time. If the irritation persists then stop using the silicone gel sheet completely and tell your therapist.

## How long will I need to use the silicone gel?

Best results are usually seen after 2-4 months; however, you may need to use the silicone for up to 18 months. This is the amount of time scars normally take to fully mature. But this varies by individual, and you will be reviewed on a regular basis by your therapist so that changes to your treatment can be made if necessary.

## Caring for the silicone gel sheet

When not being used, keep the sheet flat and re-stick it to its original plastic coating or a similar plastic surface. Keep it away from direct heat as this will damage the silicone.

Before applying the gel sheet make sure the area is dry. If you have been told to massage cream into your scar, make sure this has dried in before applying the gel sheet and make sure the gel sheet covers an area beyond the cream so that it will stick and stay in place.

The gel sheet should be replaced every 3-7 days or once it starts to lose its stickiness or wears out. Throw the old sheet away.

**PLEASE ALSO READ THE MANUFACTURER INFORMATION LEAFLET**

## Precautions

Side effects are uncommon. Stop using the silicone gel sheet and contact your therapist as soon as possible if you experience:

- Sore, irritated, infected or broken skin
- Increased redness or a rash under, or around the gel sheet
- Wet or soggy skin that looks whitened and wrinkly
- Any loss of movement where a scar crosses a joint

## Please let us know if you suffer from any of the following conditions:

- Diabetes
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Heart disease
- Renal (kidney) problems
- Raynaud's disease
- Dermatological skin conditions
- Other

## 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](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

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**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](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

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