

## SCAR IMPROVEMENT

Notes for guidance

If you have scars that bother you or that you feel are distasteful and mar your body's otherwise pleasant appearance, it is possible to repair the damage and improve the way you look. Whether you have suffered an accident or had surgery in the past that resulted in scarring, scar revision can help restore your body's beautiful features, letting your inner beauty shine through.

### What is scar revision and how can it help me?

Scar revision is the improvement of scars using various surgical techniques. In some rare circumstances a scar may be permanently removed; these are usually smaller scars, such as acne scars. Usually, some remnants of the scars are going to remain but they will be much less noticeable. Often, the scar will be disguised, through treatments that lessen the damage. Through the use of dermabrasion and laser treatments, the skin can be smoothed out, making the damage less noticeable.

Collagen injections, punch grafts and skin grafts may be used to fill in scarred areas. Steroids or silicon may be used to flatten out scars and smooth the skin, and some procedures may move healthy skin from other parts of the body to fix areas that have been damaged.

### Am I a good candidate for scar revision procedures?

Your physician will take a complete medical history, giving you a customized consultation before the procedure, going over the criteria with you before beginning treatment to see if you are a good candidate, and determine which treatment will be the best for you. Patients should be healthy, and should be realistic in their expectations for the scar revision procedure. Patients should be preferably non-smokers – if you do smoke, it is imperative that you stop smoking before well before the surgery to avoid complications both during the procedure and while healing.

During your consultation, you will become knowledgeable about what treatments are available, and be able to discuss them with your surgeon in detail. Some patients may need multiple treatments, or different procedures performed in support of each other, in order to obtain the best, most natural-looking results possible.

### How can my scars be reduced or erased?

The different procedures for scar revision may take minutes to hours, with some requiring multiple visits to complete. Scars that are sunken may be filled with collagen injections, skin taken from other parts of the body using punch grafting (punching out the scarred tissue and replacing it with healthy skin), or skin grafting (small slices or "sheets" of skin are removed in layers and bound onto the scarred area). Scarred tissue may be smoothed out or resurfaced using dermabrasion or laser treatments. Resurfacing laser treatment is used to smooth the surface of the tissue layer, and vascular lasers are used to shrink the vessels that feed blood to the scar area. Steroids may be injected or applied to the surface of scar tissue to reduce the size and the redness of the tissue.

Silicone gel sheets can be wrapped on certain types of scar tissue to minimize and flatten the skin. Another technique which may be used by your surgeon is to stretch the skin by means of a balloon, thus allowing scar tissue to be removed; the remaining skin is then pulled closed and sutured.

## Recovery – what to expect

Though most scar revision procedures have a short recovery time lasting days or weeks, more extensive cases may require months to fully recover. Some patients may have work restrictions for a limited time, with most bandages left on short-term - but some incisions may require long-term support or coverage. Some procedures may have other restrictions, such as exposure to sunlight. Some treatments have residual mild discomfort or pain that may be controlled through the use of medication, or the application of hot or cold compresses. Some limitations may be placed on your normal routine, and restrictions on bathing or exercise are not uncommon. Your physician will be able to discuss all aspects of your recovery based on the treatments that are required for your specific situation.

## Risks and complications – things to consider

Having surgery to reduce scars may leave new scars; therefore, there is the slight chance that the new scarring will be as bad as or even worse than the original. There are also risks of allergic reactions from the type of treatment being performed, or to the anesthesia. Bleeding, swelling and a change in the sensitivity of the skin tissue may also arise, and skin coloration issues might also be a concern. In some cases, there may be complications with blood flow to the affected area. Some complications and risks may be dependent upon your medical history, and your physician will need to monitor the possibilities.

Scar revision complications are rare – but when they occur, they can be treated by your surgeon, and you will need to follow his instructions very closely.

## Will the results of my procedure be noticeable right away?

Depending on the type of procedure and the outcome of the healing process, the original scarring will probably appear flatter, thinner and more lightly colored. All of these may help to disguise the original scarring. The scar or the surrounding tissue will become leveled and appear smoother and much less obvious. Some treatments are immediately apparent but are temporary, such as collagen injections. Many patients are pleased by a disguised or less noticeable scar, and find the renewed beauty of their skin well worth undergoing the procedure.

## Further Information

This brochure has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to cover many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon.

There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation.

If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a consultation please fill in the online form on our website at [www.surgeryone.co.uk](http://www.surgeryone.co.uk). All enquiries are always treated confidentially.