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Information at www.qvh.nhs.uk – Our services/Therapies/Hand Therapy



Queen Victoria Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Hand Therapy

Scar Massage

A scar is a permanent mark left on the skin after an injury has healed. Although scars never disappear completely, most will fade and become paler, softer and flatter. This can take up to two years. It is normal for scars to change colour, especially in response to temperature changes, e.g. purple/white when cold, redder when warm. It is common to feel discomfort in the cold. Massaging can help any remaining dissolvable stitches to fall out, soften the scar, relieve itching/dryness, decrease sensitivity and encourage movement. Other treatments may be appropriate for very large or unsightly scars.

To do:



- Once the wound has healed fully (usually 2 – 3 weeks after surgery), use your other hand to apply a small amount of non-perfumed moisturising cream to the scarred area. (Not vitamin E or aqueous cream.)
- Massage in circular motions as well as moving vertically and horizontally back and forth across the scar.
- Try to apply enough pressure to blanch/lighten the scar. You can press more firmly as it becomes comfortable to do so, but not so firmly that you cause your skin to become sore or open up.
- Try to move the skin away from any underlying tissue it is stuck to – but do not expect to release it completely.
- Massage at least 3 times a day for 5 - 10 minutes each time.
- Continue to massage until you feel the scarred skin feels similar to the rest of your hand, e.g. soft and mobile.
- Cover new scars in the sun or use high factor sunscreen.

