

*Plastic Surgery*

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## Scar Care

### What is a scar?

Scars are areas of fibrous tissue that replaces normal skin or other tissue after injury. A scar results from the biologic process of wound repair of the skin and other tissues of the body.

### What are factors that can affect how my body will scar?

1. **Your age:** Our skin becomes less elastic and thinner as we age, this means it may take longer for your incision to heal, however less vigorous healing actually results in better looking scars.
2. **Your genetics and skin tone:** If your parents or siblings tend to scar heavily, you are likely to do the same. Generally darker skin tones tend to have thicker scars, fair skin tones tend to have less visible scars.
3. **Size, depth and location of your incision:** Scars on the face, head and neck tend to heal better than those on the arms and legs; these tend to heal better than those on the trunk and back. Typically the shoulder and back will develop the thickest or widest scars.

### What can I do to improve the quality of my scar?

1. Protect fresh scars with Sun block for 3-6 months after surgery. Sun exposure can discolor your scar lighter or darker than your natural skin tone.
2. Scar massage: starting at two weeks after your surgery scar massage will loosen soft tissue, increase circulation, desensitize, reduces “tight” feeling and enhances the texture of your scar. This effect may simply be speeding up what happens normally with time.
  - a. On clean and dry scar firmly press pads of finger onto healed scar.
  - b. Press until skin blanches; gently rock your fingers back and forth to move the scar tissue. (This movement should be small and precise to be most effective.)
  - c. Continue until the tissue loosens (approximately 30 seconds)
  - d. Repeat this procedure along the length of your scar.
  - e. Upon completion of massage apply moisturizing lotion. Avoid oil, petroleum and scented lotions. We recommend using *Nivea, Glaxyl, or Sween 24.*
  - f. Frequency of scar massage is 3-5 times per day.

**Dr. Christopher D. Taylor, M.D., Inc**  
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3. Precautions to scar massage:
  - a. Avoid firmly sliding or rubbing fingers against fresh scars; blisters may result.
  - b. Only perform scar massage after cleaning and drying the scar.
  - c. Do not apply lotion prior to massage; blisters may result.

**What topical scar products are best?**

1. Topical silicone gel and silicone sheeting have reasonable supporting evidence for improving scar quality. The topical silicone gel is used on the face, and is applied as directed to scar over several months. Silicone sheeting is used for scars on the body. It is applied 23 out of 24 hours per day for approximately 3 months.
  - a. Silicone scar gel products: Scar gel, Dermatix
  - b. Silicone sheeting products: Cica care, Mepiform
2. 3M Micropore tape may also be used there is less supporting evidence for this product; however it stays in place better and is less work than massaging the scar, or using silicone sheeting.

We do not recommend vitamin E, aloe vera, onion extract or tee tree oil for up to 6 weeks after your surgery, or until the skin has healed completely. There is not strong evidence one way or another for these treatments. Many people do believe these treatments help in scar healing. These treatments are unlikely to cause problems such as the theoretical widening scars, if used after 6 weeks.

**It may take up to one year after your surgery for your scar to mature to its final result.**