Scar Management

Scars form as a normal part of healing when the skin is damaged from a burn, trauma, or surgery. Everyone forms different scars. It can take up to 1 year for scars to heal completely. It will take at least 6 to 8 weeks after surgery or injury for you to start to see a difference in your child’s scar. At this time, scars begin to change from a thick, red, raised scar to a thin, flat, white scar. It is important to use scar management techniques on your child’s scar. This will help to make the scar more flat, smooth and flexible. The more flat, smooth and flexible a scar is the less painful and noticeable it is for your child.

Scar management techniques are: scar massage, silicone application, and sunblock.

Techniques

- After your child’s sutures have been taken out or dissolved, his or her doctor will let you know when it is time to start scar massage (usually 2 to 3 weeks after surgery, after the scab on the incision has fallen off).
- For the first 2 to 4 weeks, you should gently rub the incision for 5 to 10 minutes twice daily along the same direction as the incision. You must use enough pressure to change the color of the incision from pink to pale.
- After about 4 weeks, you can begin to massage the scar using different motions.
- Massage in all directions (Picture 1): up, down, side to side, circular, pulling apart, pulling outward, folding together, and crisscross.
- Oils, such as vitamin E oil, gels such as aloe vera, and lotions, such as Eucerine®, Aquaphor®, or Mederma®, are moisturizing and can be used to help soften the scar and make scar massage easier. Avoid using lotions with strong fragrances.
- Your child may also be given special tape with silicone on it. Your child’s doctor will tell you how to use it.
- ALWAYS use sunblock SPF 30 or greater with UVA/UVB coverage on your child’s scar.

![Picture 1 Examples of massage directions](image)