

POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Improving scar healing



SOUTHERN AESTHETIC
PLASTIC SURGERY

Scar maturation

Every effort will have been made to achieve a subtle post operative scar. Unfortunately all surgery leaves scars, but most of these fade with time.

Your scar and any reconstructive flap will thicken with scar and become redder during the first six weeks, and then start to thin and fade.

Patience will be needed, as scar maturation is slow, and it can be a year before your scar achieves its best result. You can gauge how far along the maturation pathway you how red the scar is. It typically takes 6-12 months for the redness to fade. The same scar maturation is all the way under the flap, so it will take this long for swollen flaps to settle.

The first 1-2 weeks after suture removal

The wound will need a little extra help while it becomes waterproof.

Micropore paper tape should be placed over suture lines for the first two weeks after your postoperative visit. This can be showered over, and changed when it peels away.

A thin layer of Vaseline can be used instead in parts where the use of tape is impractical, eg the folds around the base of the nose.

Long term scar maturation with Silicone

Silicone products can be started 2-3 weeks after surgery.

Tapes or sheets, such as **Medisil** or Cica-Care, yield the best results. Follow the included instructions. This involves placing a silicone sheet over the wound almost all day over three months. This can be impractical in exposed areas such as the face. In these cases a silicone ointment, such as **Strataderm**, can be substituted during the day.

These products can be obtained from most pharmacies, and are also stocked at our practice.

Signs to watch out for

Sometimes buried dissolving sutures come to the surface like small pimples with a little spike of suture in them. You can visit the office to have this attended to.

Scars should start fading and thinning after 6-8 weeks. The scar thickening beyond this may be a sign of abnormal healing, like a cyst or keloid. We want to help with this, so please come and see us if it arises.

Follow up visits

You should come for an appointment if you ever feel that there is a problem or something unexpected during your recovery.

Scarring tends to peak after **6-8 weeks**. That is usually a good time for a visit.

The scar should be well on its way to settling after **6 months**. That can be another good time for a check on the outcome of your surgery. It can also be a good time to consider whether your result can be improved at all. Every effort will have been made to get the best result during your first operation, but occasionally a second operation can make things better still. We can discuss this at a visit once the scar has matured.