

Scar care

This leaflet tells you how to look after your scar and help it to heal. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to call your hand therapist on the number given at the end of this leaflet.

What is a scar?

A scar is part of your body's normal healing process. It is a mixture of blood vessels, cells and fibrous tissue.

The amount of scar tissue depends on:

- how much time has passed since your injury
- the extent of your injury
- the size of the incision (cut) made for surgery
- general health

Your scar may appear extremely good immediately after your operation, but then go through a period when it seems to get worse. It may become more red and raised. This should improve, but healing can take up to 18 months.

Scar massage



You should massage your scar for **five** minutes, **five** times each day.

Massaging your scar regularly can greatly help it to heal. Massage helps to prevent the scar from sticking to the body tissues underneath it, which can limit movement. It also helps to reduce redness and swelling and speeds up the flattening of the scar.

For two of your five daily massages, use a non-perfumed cream such as E45, Nivea or aqueous cream on your scar. This will help to reduce the amount of dry skin and soften your scar.

Your hand therapist will also show you how to do deeper massage, in circular motions across your scar. This should be done for five minutes every two hours.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the hand therapy department at St Thomas' Hospital on **020 7188 4172** (Monday to Friday 8am–5pm) or the hand therapy department at Guy's Hospital **020 7188 4185** (Monday to Friday 8.30am–4.30pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership