

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEALING PROCESS

When will my scar go away?

It takes a full year for the healing process to be complete, so patience is of the essence. Most of the significant changes are in the first 6 months. Your scar will go through several stages of healing before the redness fades and it settles down into a fine whitish line.

Can my wound open up?

During the next six months your wound is fragile. Do not pull on it as it could break open. The skin will never return to full strength in the area of your scar. It will take six months to return to near its original strength.

When will the area of my surgery feel normal again?

It often takes a couple years for the nerves in the surgical area to settle down. During this time you may experience numbness, tingling, itching, or a crawling sensation. Some areas never gain full feeling back. This is unavoidable and normal.

When will the stuffiness in my nose go away?

If your surgery site was located on your nose, especially the sides, you may experience nasal stuffiness for several months. This is normal and will gradually resolve as swelling subsides.

How long should I continue wound care?

Once your wound is healed and there are no more open areas, you may discontinue wound care.

When may I apply make-up or sunscreen?

You may apply make-up and sunscreen after the sutures or Steri-Strips are removed and the wound is completely healed. Once healed, use sunscreen every day to your face and other areas exposed to the sun.

Why does my scar feel lumpy?

You may feel lumps and bumps under the skin. This is normal and is due to the dissolvable sutures under the surface of the skin. They will go away with time. Occasionally a pimple may form along the suture line as a result of an incompletely dissolved buried stitch. Apply a warm compress several times a day for a few days to the area if this occurs. If it does not resolve call us.

Why is my scar puffy?

Sometimes after one to three months a scar will become puffy. We can treat this with a small injection of cortisone that will help it flatten. Sometimes scars benefit from a procedure known as dermabrasion, a type of skin sanding. Generally this is performed in the 1-6 month time period to help a scar blend in with the adjacent skin.

Should I massage my scar?

After one month you may gently begin massaging your scar for a few minutes 3-5 times per day.

Should I use Vitamin E oil or other scar products?

Generally these products are not harmful, unless they irritate your skin or you become allergic to them. There are a number of creams and products available (e.g. silicone gel sheeting, which is available over the counter at your drug store) that help to moisturize the wound and may help improve healing. Plain Vaseline petroleum jelly works equally well and is inexpensive and non-allergenic.

Will I have another skin cancer?

You have demonstrated you can grow skin cancers. Your best defense is to see your dermatologist on a regular basis, at least once to twice per year. Regular skin checks can detect skin cancers early, often even before you notice them.

The next six months is a time when healing is progressing, albeit slowly. Patience is the key, but if at any time you need to be seen or just need reassurance, we are here. Please give us a call at (801) 466-MOHS (6647).