

SPRINGFIELD ENT & FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY

3555 South Culpepper Circle
Springfield, Missouri 65804
(417) 887-3855 / www.springfieldent.com

Scar Revision

Please avoid taking non - Tylenol pain medication such as ibuprofen, Motrin, Aleve, aspirin, and Advil for two weeks prior to surgery as this increases the chance of bleeding and bruising. Garlic and Vitamin E also raise this risk. Please contact our office if you have any questions about medication.

Prominent or visible scars may occur after surgery, injury, or for other reason. Although these normally heal well, there may be an unsatisfactory appearance for a variety of reasons:

- Lacerations (cuts) caused by injury are more traumatic than a surgical incision. Tissue may not heal as well as a result.
- Infection of a laceration or surgical incision.
- Some areas of the body heal less well. Areas exposed to skin tension and stretching with movement are more likely to have widened scars.
- Some people heal less well than others. Darker skin is more likely to develop pigmented scars. Some individuals form *keloids*, which are widened, raised, and very prominent scars.

What makes a scar visible?

- It is essential to realize that any incision, injury, or laceration will result in some type of scar; hopefully it is as attractive and minimally noticeable as possible.
- Elevation - elevated scars such as keloids are more prominent.
- Depression - depressed scars catch shadows in overhead light.
- Widening - scars which stretch and widen are more noticeable.
- Pigmentation - differences in color from the surrounding skin increase prominence. Scars and incisions are usually pink or pigmented (depending on skin type) initially, but this fades over 3 - 12 months.

Goals of scar revision

Scar revision seeks to make an incision or injury area less noticeable. The goal is to exchange the current scar for one that is more attractive and less visible. Several things may be done:

- A widened, elevated, or depressed scar is improved simply by removing it and replacing it with a narrower, finer, straight scar.
- Keloids - are frequently very difficult to treat because they may simply grow back with the scar revision and even may be larger. Steroid injection and pressure devices (for ear lobe keloids) may be used.
- The scar may be less visible if its direction is altered to match natural skin creases.
- Linear scars are more likely to catch the eye than irregular lines. Scars may be made into a long, running W - pattern or into an irregular geometric broken line.

Scheduling and performing scar revision

- The procedure will normally be discussed during a cosmetic consultation.
- Scheduling may be done on that day or by telephone later on.
- Photographs - are taken before surgery and at various times after.
- Procedure - will normally be performed in our office with local anesthetic. It may be done in the hospital or outpatient surgery center for pediatric patients or for patients who prefer anesthesia or sedation. Anesthesia or sedation may be necessary for larger procedures which take longer.
- Follow up appointments - Sutures will normally removed 5 - 7 days after surgery. We will then see patients back 1, 6, and 12 months after surgery (and otherwise as needed or a patient wishes).

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Other procedures - Scar revision may be enhanced by other procedures performed afterward that further help camouflage the scar or incision:

- Laser resurfacing - of the area can help blend the scar into surrounding skin.
- Dermabrasion - a technique to smooth the skin with a powered instrument that removes the surface of the skin and allows it to heal back. A similar but more minor procedure called *dermasanding* may also work well.

Postoperative care

- Keep dry for 24 - 48 hours as instructed. Showering is OK after this.
- Antibiotic Ointment - apply bacitracin, triple antibiotic, similar ointment 4 times daily to incision for at least 10 days or until completely healed.
- Crusting - should be gently removed. Soften the crust with the antibiotic ointment and then remove gently with a Q-tip and hydrogen peroxide. Rub in a direction parallel to the incision to avoid pulling the incision open.
- Sun exposure should be avoided / minimized for 6 months after any procedure since it may cause increased pigmentation in the area. Sunscreen with at least protection factor 30 (SPF 30+) should be used.
- Trauma - should be avoided to the area for 1 - 2 months.

Risks and complications

- Scar revision is generally a very safe treatment. However, like anything in medicine, adverse and undesired effects may occur. Some of these include:
- Adverse reaction - allergic or other reaction to anesthetic or medications.
- Asymmetry - difference in the amount of effect that the treatment has in one area or side of the face compared to another. Of course, all faces have some amount of asymmetry from one side to the other.
- Unfavorable healing - the scar revision may not heal as desired and may require further treatment. As mentioned above, keloids have a tendency to come back

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in your health care. Please let us know how we may make your medical experience more pleasant.

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