**INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS**

## Cardiac rehabilitation: Scar management

Following your cardiac surgery it is normal to feel some tenderness and sensitivity around your scar.

Scars are a normal outcome of tissue repair following surgery, however, scarring varies from person to person, therefore some people's scars may take longer to heal than others.

Scars can become tight, sensitive, itchy, red and painful. If this doesn't improve with time there are some simple things that can be done to help.

### Scar massage

It is recommended to use a non-perfumed moisturising cream when massaging scars. Don't massage if there are any signs of weeping or bleeding.

Massage helps to:
- Soften and flatten the scar
- Keep the scar flexible
- Decrease sensitivity of the scar.

### How to massage

Use the pad of your thumb/finger and move in a slow circular motion so that the skin moves on the underlying tissues. Repeat this process over the whole scar area.

Gentle pressure should be applied sufficient to blanch the thumb/finger nail.

The therapist can practice this with you to ensure your technique is correct.

Repeat this along the scar for 5-10 minutes. This can be done two to three times a day.

### Precautions

If your scar becomes blistered, re-opens or develops a rash stop massaging and seek medical advice.

### Silicone gel/sheets

Gel and sheets can be used on healing skin (not open wounds) to reduce redness and irritation to the scar. It is important you gradually allow your skin to get used to the gel by building up the amount of time you wear it.

### How to use silicone gel/sheets

- Remove silicone from the sheet - don’t throw the sheet away
- Apply directly to the scar
- Use a dressing to hold in place if necessary
- The gel will last several weeks - once it starts to fall apart or is no longer sticking you will need a replacement.
**Contact details**  
Harriet Francis, Cardiac Rehabilitation Physiotherapist, telephone 01623 672296.

**Further sources of information**  
NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)  
Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

**Patient Experience Team (PET)**  
PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King’s Mill Hospital**: 01623 672222  
**Newark Hospital**: 01636 685692  
**Email**: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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