

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Frequently Asked Questions: Facial Scar Revision

This leaflet has been written to help your understanding of **facial scar revision** and answers many commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like a further explanation, please ask your surgeon. This leaflet has been taken from the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons.

The problem

Facial scars can arise from trauma or surgery. Scars tend to improve by themselves over time, surgery to revise a scar is not usually carried out for at least six months after the original injury or operation. **Scar revision** is designed to improve or disguise the appearance of an existing scar. **Scar revisions** can be carried out under

- general anaesthesia (this means you are put to sleep completely)
- local anaesthesia (an injection to make the area numb).

What does the operation involve?

Treatments vary according to the type and size of the scar. Some scars are cut out and re-stitched carefully. Other scars are removed by abrasion or laser surgery and require no stitching.

What can I expect after the operation?

- **Scar revision** is not a particularly painful operation although it might be necessary for you to take simple painkillers (for example: paracetamol or Ibuprofen) afterwards. The discomfort is usually worse for the first few days although it may take a week or so to completely disappear.
- If your surgeon feels that infection may be a problem you will be given a course of antibiotics.

- Swelling and bruising is generally worse for the first few days after the operation. The swelling can be reduced by using cold compresses and sleeping propped upright.

How long will I be in hospital?

If the surgery is carried out under local anaesthesia you will not need to stay in hospital. If a general anaesthetic is necessary, you might need to stay in hospital overnight.

Do I need to take any time off work?

This varies from person to person. It also depends on what type of job you do. Most people require a couple of days off work. You should remember that you cannot drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after a **general** anaesthetic.

Do I need to do anything when I get home?

It's very important to take care of the wound after **scar revision**.

- A dressing may be put over the wound after the surgery.
- You need to keep the wound dry until the stitches have been removed or until your surgeon says it is alright to wash the wound.
- Stitches are usually removed after a week.
- You may need to continue dressing the wound after the stitches have been removed.

What are the possible problems?

- Some oozing from the wound is common in the first day or so after surgery. If bleeding is a problem, apply pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a clean handkerchief or swab.
- Infection is uncommon, particularly if antibiotics have been prescribed.
- It is usual for a **scar revision** to appear red for several weeks after surgery.
- Even in the best hands unsightly scars can reappear despite scar revision.

What are the alternatives to this treatment?

- Additional forms of treatment may be suggested (for example: silicon dressings or steroid injections into the scar).
- There are no surgical alternatives to this treatment.

After the treatment

- After scar revision, a follow up appointment is usually arranged.
- Further photographs to compare the scar after surgery may be taken.

For more information:

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Adapted from:

British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. Blepharoplasty.

<http://www.baoms.org.uk/>



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Help with this leaflet:



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Document history

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Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk
Contact number	01223 216412
Publish/Review date	January 2011/January 2014 (no changes made)
File name	FAQS_Scar_Revision.doc
Version number/Ref	4/PIN0697