

Informed Consent - Scar Revision Surgery

INSTRUCTIONS

This is an informed-consent document that has been prepared to help inform you about scar revision surgery, its risks, and alternative treatments.

It is important that you read this information carefully and completely. Please sign the consent for surgery as proposed by your plastic surgeon.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The surgical treatment of scars is a procedure frequently performed by plastic surgeons. Scars are the unavoidable result of injuries, disease, or surgery. It is impossible to totally remove the presence of a scar, yet plastic surgery may improve the appearance and texture of scars. There are many different techniques of scar revision surgery.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

Alternative forms of treatment consist of not treating the scar condition, injections of cortisone type drugs into the scar, or the use of special compressive garments/devices worn over the scar. Dermabrasion, laser treatments and other surgical techniques may be used to revise scars. Risks and potential complications are associated with alternative forms of treatment.

RISKS OF SCAR REVISION SURGERY

Every surgical procedure involves a certain amount of risk and it is important that you understand these risks and the possible complications associated with them. In addition, every procedure has limitations. An individual's choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on the comparison of the risk to potential benefit. Although the majority of patients do not experience these complications, you should discuss each of them with your plastic surgeon to make sure you understand all possible consequences of surgical revision of scars.

Bleeding- It is possible, though unusual, to experience a bleeding episode during or after surgery. Intraoperative blood transfusions may be required. Should post-operative bleeding occur, it may require an emergency treatment to drain the accumulated blood or blood transfusion. Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for 2 weeks before or after surgery, as this may increase the risk of bleeding. Non-prescription "herbs" and dietary supplements can increase the risk of surgical bleeding. Hematoma can occur at any time following injury. If blood transfusions are necessary to treat blood loss, there is the risk of blood-related infections such as hepatitis and HIV (AIDS). Heparin medications that are used to prevent blood clots in veins can produce bleeding and decreased blood platelets.

Infection- Infection is unusual after surgery. Should an infection occur, additional treatment including antibiotics, hospitalization, or additional surgery may be necessary.

Scarring- All surgery leaves scars, some more visible than others. Although good wound healing after a surgical procedure is expected, abnormal scars may occur within the skin and deeper tissues. Scars may be unattractive and of different color than the surrounding skin tone. Scar appearance may also vary within the same scar. Scars may be asymmetrical (appear different on the right and left side of the body). There is the possibility of visible marks in the skin from sutures. In some cases scars may require surgical revision or treatment.

Skin Discoloration / Swelling- Some bruising and swelling normally occurs following surgery. The skin in or near the surgical site can appear either lighter or darker than surrounding skin. Although uncommon, swelling and skin discoloration may persist for long periods of time and, in rare situations, may be permanent.

Skin Sensitivity- Itching, tenderness, or exaggerated responses to hot or cold temperatures may occur after surgery. Usually this resolves during healing, but in rare situations it may be chronic.

Pain- You will experience pain after your surgery. Pain of varying intensity and duration may occur and persist after surgery. Chronic pain may occur very infrequently from nerves becoming trapped in scar tissue.

Damage to Deeper Structures- There is the potential for injury to deeper structures including nerves, blood vessels, muscles, and lungs (pneumothorax) during any surgical procedure. The potential for this to occur varies according where on the body surgery is being performed. Injury to deeper structures may be temporary or permanent.

Wound Disruption- Until wound healing is complete; it is possible to split open the surgical wound where the scar revision was performed. Wound disruption can produce a poor surgical result. If this occurs, additional treatment may be necessary.

Sutures- Some surgical techniques use deep sutures. You may notice these sutures after your surgery. Sutures may spontaneously poke through the skin, become visible or produce irritation that requires removal.

Skin Contour Irregularities- Contour irregularities and depressions may occur after scar revision surgery. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin can occur. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions or “dog ears” are always a possibility and may require additional surgery. This may improve with time, or it can be surgically corrected.

Allergic Reactions- In rare cases, local allergies to tape, suture materials and glues, blood products, topical preparations or injected agents have been reported. Serious systemic reactions including shock (anaphylaxis) may occur to drugs used during surgery and prescription medications. Allergic reactions may require additional treatment.

Surgical Anesthesia- Both local and general anesthesia involve risk. There is the possibility of complications, injury, and even death from all forms of surgical anesthesia or sedation.

Delayed Healing- Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Some areas of the skin may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Some areas of skin may die, requiring frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue.
Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.

Change in Skin Sensation- It is common to experience diminished (or loss) of skin sensation in areas that have had surgery. Diminished (or complete loss of skin sensation) may not totally resolve.

Shock- In rare circumstances, your surgical procedure can cause severe trauma, particularly when multiple or extensive procedures are performed. Although serious complications are

infrequent, infections or excessive fluid loss can lead to severe illness and even death. If surgical shock occurs, hospitalization and additional treatment would be necessary.

Unsatisfactory Result- Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained. You may be disappointed with the results of scar revision surgery. This would include risks such as asymmetry, unacceptable visible deformities at the ends of the incisions (dog ears), loss of function, poor healing, wound disruption, skin death and loss of sensation. It may be necessary to perform additional surgery to improve your results.

Cardiac and Pulmonary Complications- Surgery, especially longer procedures, may be associated with the formation of, or increase in, blood clots in the venous system. Pulmonary complications may occur secondarily to both blood clots (pulmonary emboli), fat deposits (fat emboli) or partial collapse of the lungs after general anesthesia. Pulmonary and fat emboli can be life-threatening or fatal in some circumstances. Air travel, inactivity and other conditions may increase the incidence of blood clots traveling to the lungs causing a major blood clot that may result in death. It is important to discuss with your physician any past history of blood clots or swollen legs that may contribute to this condition. Cardiac complications are a risk with any surgery and anesthesia, even in patients without symptoms. Should any of these complications occur, you may require hospitalization and additional treatment. If you experience shortness of breath, chest pains, or unusual heart beats, seek medical attention immediately.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES

Skin Disorders / Skin Cancer: Skin disorders and skin cancer may occur independently of scar revision surgery.

Long-Term Results- Subsequent alterations in scar appearance may occur as the result of aging, weight loss or gain, sun exposure, pregnancy, menopause, or other circumstances not related to scar revision surgery.

Female Patient Information- It is important to inform your plastic surgeon if you use birth control pills, estrogen replacement, or if you believe you may be pregnant. Many medications including antibiotics may neutralize the preventive effect of birth control pills, allowing for conception and pregnancy.

Mental Health Disorders and Elective Surgery- It is important that all patients seeking to undergo elective surgery have realistic expectations that focus on improvement rather than perfection. Complications or less than satisfactory results are sometimes unavoidable, may require additional surgery and often are stressful. Please openly discuss with your surgeon, prior to surgery, any history that you may have of significant emotional depression or mental health disorders. Although many individuals may benefit psychologically from the results of elective surgery, effects on mental health cannot be accurately predicted.

Medications- There are many adverse reactions that occur as the result of taking over-the-counter, herbal, and/or prescription medications. Be sure to check with your physician about any drug interactions that may exist with medications which you are already taking. If you have an adverse reaction, stop the drugs immediately and call your plastic surgeon for further instructions. If the reaction is severe, go immediately to the nearest emergency room. When taking the prescribed pain medications after surgery, realize that they can affect your thought process and coordination. Do not drive, do not operate complex equipment, do not make any important decisions, and do not drink any alcohol while taking these medications. Be sure to take your prescribed medication only as directed.

ADDITIONAL SURGERY NECESSARY

In some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal revision of scarring with a single surgical procedure. Multiple procedures may be necessary. Should complications occur, additional surgery or other treatments may be necessary. Even though risks and complications occur infrequently, the risks cited are the ones that are particularly associated with scar revision surgery. Other complications and risks can occur but are even more uncommon. The practice of medicine and surgery is not an exact science. Although good results are expected, there cannot be any guarantee or warranty expressed or implied on the results that may be obtained.

PATIENT COMPLIANCE

Follow all physician instructions carefully; this is essential for the success of your outcome. Patient compliance with post-operative activity restriction is critical. It is important that the surgical incisions are not subjected to excessive force, swelling, abrasion, or motion during the time of healing. Personal and vocational activities that involve the potential for re-injury to the scar revision must be avoided until healing is completed. Protective dressings and drains should not be removed unless instructed by your plastic surgeon. Successful post-operative function depends on both surgery and subsequent care. Physical activity that increases your heart rate or blood pressure may cause bruising, swelling, fluid accumulation and the need for return to surgery. It is wise to refrain from intimate physical activities after surgery until your physician states it is safe. It is important that you participate in follow-up care, return for aftercare, and promote your recovery after surgery.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Most health insurance companies exclude coverage for cosmetic surgical operations or any complications that might occur from surgery. Please carefully review your health insurance subscriber information pamphlet. **Most insurance plans exclude coverage for secondary or revisionary surgery.**

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The cost of surgery involves several charges for the services provided. The total includes fees charged by your surgeon, the cost of surgical supplies, anesthesia, laboratory tests, and possible outpatient hospital charges, depending on where the surgery is performed. Depending on whether the cost of surgery is covered by an insurance plan, you will be responsible for necessary co-payments, deductibles, and charges not covered. The fees charged for this procedure do not include any potential future costs for additional procedures that you elect to have or require in order to revise, optimize, or complete your outcome. Additional costs may occur should complications develop from the surgery. Secondary surgery or hospital day-surgery charges involved with revision surgery will also be your responsibility. **In signing the consent for this surgery/procedure, you acknowledge that you have been informed about its risk and consequences and accept responsibility for the clinical decisions that were made along with the financial costs of all future treatments.**

DISCLAIMER

Informed-consent documents are used to communicate information about the proposed surgical treatment of a disease or condition along with disclosure of risks and alternative forms of treatment(s), including no surgery. The informed-consent process attempts to define principles of risk disclosure that should generally meet the needs of most patients in most circumstances.

However, informed-consent documents should not be considered all-inclusive in defining other methods of care and risks encountered. Your plastic surgeon may provide you with additional or different information which is based on all the facts in your particular case and the current state of medical knowledge.

Informed-consent documents are not intended to define or serve as the standard of medical care. Standards of medical care are determined on the basis of all of the facts involved in an individual case and are subject to change as scientific knowledge and technology advance and as practice patterns evolve.

It is important that you read the above information carefully and have all of your questions answered before signing the consent.