

Bio-Oil®

Bio-Oil has developed a scar assessment tool to help you identify the type of scar and offer appropriate advice and treatment

SITE & SKIN TYPE

SITE – Scars on high mobility areas such as joints can restrict movement as the tissue can tighten. In such cases it will help to apply a moisturising product to maintain elasticity as the scar matures.

Scars heal differently on different areas of the body. Typically the face and neck will produce better scars than areas such as the tip of shoulders, earlobes and middle of the chest which can on rare occasions produce keloid scars.

SKIN TYPE – Darker skin types (particularly Afro-Caribbean and Asian skin) are susceptible to keloid scarring, where there is an overgrowth of dense fibrous tissue outside of the boundary of the wound. Fair freckled skin types tend to scar more than other skin types.

CATEGORY

There are four different categories of scar that each heal and mature slightly differently:

KELOID SCARS – grow beyond the boundary of the original wound site, due to an imbalance in the production of collagen protein.

HYPERTROPHIC SCARS – raised and red but do not exceed the boundaries of the original wound site. They can continue to thicken for up to 6 months and can be very itchy or painful.

CONTRACTURE SCARS – causes tightening of the skin and may cause discomfort or affect movement. Contracture scars are often a result of burns.

ATROPHIC – typically small, flat or depressed relative to the surrounding skin and often caused by acne where collagen is destroyed within the dermis where the cysts occurred. Skin can be dryer and less elastic.

AGE

AGE OF SCAR – young scars (typically less than 6 – 9 months since the wound healed) will present red and possibly raised. Young scars are still maturing so it is important to reassure the patient that the colour will fade over time. Older scars will be faded and pale.

AGE OF PATIENT – both keloid and hypertrophic scarring are more common in younger (typically 10-30 years old) patients with darker skin.

REASSURE & RECOMMEND

REASSURE – whilst scars do not always present a medical issue, they can have a psychological impact on the patient, so where a patient has aesthetic concerns, reassure that scars are extremely common (on average each person has three scars on their face or body). For new scars you can reassure that the scar will continue to mature and improve for up to two years.

MAINTAIN ELASTICITY – for scars on mobility areas or those causing discomfort, skin should be kept supple with regular application of a topical oil or cream.

SELF CARE – nothing can completely remove a scar, however applying a topical oil or cream can help to improve skin condition and empower the patient to connect with the scar and feel more positive.

REFER – for cases of severe or abnormal scarring (e.g. keloid) where the scar is causing physical pain or severe mental distress it may be necessary to refer to a dermatologist or plastic surgeon to discuss further treatment options including corticosteroid injections or surgical procedures. In cases of severe scarring there are several support groups the patient may find helpful including Changing Faces, British Association of Skin Camouflage, The Scar Information Service and Burned Children's Club.





SITE & SKIN TYPE

Identify whether scar is on a mobility area and if the location of the scar or patient's skin type is likely to produce abnormal or worse scarring.



CATEGORY

Is it keloid, hypertrophic, atrophic or contracture scar?



AGE

Is the scar new, still maturing or fully matured?



REASSURE & RECOMMEND

Help alleviate psychological worry by reassuring patient of commonness of scarring and that scars improve over time with the skin's natural regeneration process. Recommend treatment options.

Developed by **Bio-Oil®**