

### **SCAR FORMATION**

1. All wounds of any significant depth heal by scar formation. Some individuals scar more than others, and it is usually impossible to predict exactly how one's scar will heal. Scars on the face tend to heal best, and those on the back, chest, abdomen, or upper arms and legs, tend to heal less well, as they stretch over time.
2. Scar tissue is usually red at first, then pink for 3-6 months and then fades to a slightly lighter than normal skin color. Exposure to heavy sunlight may cause a scar to heal darker. Sun avoidance and use of sunscreen over scar sites is advisable for six months after surgery.
3. It is common for slight loss of sensation or numbness to occur around scars. Most of this numbness resolves within 6-12 months, but some may persist permanently.
4. Scars continue to mature, contract, and remodel for up to 6 months. The final appearance of a scar should not be fully judged for at least 6 months.
5. Keloids are thick, firm scars that may be uncomfortable. Some individuals are predisposed to keloid formation, particularly patients with darker skin tones. Thick, raised scars are also more common in certain areas such as the mid-chest, ear lobes, around the jaw line, and over the upper arms and torso.
6. Wound infection, blood clots (hematoma), and opening of the wound after sutures are removed (dehiscence) can lead to greater scarring. Following the activity restrictions advised by your doctor, performing careful, regular wound care, and notifying your doctor promptly for any signs of infection will help minimize these risks. Unfortunately, despite diligent care and good surgical technique, depressed, raised, widened or symptomatic scars may form with any surgical procedure.
7. It is always our desire for scars to heal as nicely as possible. If your scar has not healed well, there are some procedures which may improve the appearance. These may include injection of cortisone, laser treatment, or surgical revision. If you are not pleased with how your scar has healed, you may wish to discuss these options with your doctor.