

Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, West Essex and Milton Keynes Priorities Forum Statement

NUMBER: 92

SUBJECT: Cosmetic surgical procedures for scar revision or refashioning

DATE OF DECISION: May 2018

DATE OF REVIEW: May 2021

Scar revision or refashioning is not routinely commissioned or funded, except for adults and children who have:

- (a) Scars that interfere with function - for example, severe post-surgical scars or those following burns or trauma (i.e. not cosmetic); OR
- (b) Serious scarring of the face;

All requests for funding will need to be supported by photographic evidence.

Background

A scar is a mark that is left on the skin, after a wound or an injury to the surface of the skin has healed. [1] Scarring on the skin is a natural process that can occur after a cut or injury, for example after a surgical procedure or burns. Scars form when collagen accumulates around the site of the wound or injury to heal the site. Scars are permanent but can fade over the proceeding 2 years. Treatment such as surgical revision or refashioning can be performed to minimise the appearance of the scars.

Types of Scars [2]

- Flat, pale scars

This is the most common type, which after the initial appearance of red, dark and raised, eventually becomes flatter and paler as the skin heals. They are not painful but can be itchy. If a wound is large or has edges that do not come together neatly, the healing time will be longer and the appearance will be less neat. A person who has darker skin may find the scar more obvious as the colour of the scar may stay pale in contrast to the darker skin.

- Keloid scars

These scars form when there is too much collagen at the wound site. The scar can continue to increase in size so that they can become raised and much larger than the original wound. Keloid scars can be itchy and cause discomfort.

- Hypertrophic scars

Hypertrophic scars also form when there is too much collagen at a wound site, but in contrast to keloid scars they do not grow beyond the original size of the wound. They are usually red and raised from the skin, but become flatter and paler over time. These can last for many years. These can also reduce movement.

- Pitted or sunken scars (atrophic or “ice pick” scars)

These have the appearance of being “pitted or sunken”, and can be due to skin conditions arising from acne, chicken pox or injury.

- Scar contractures

These form when the skin contracts, which can limit the movement in that area. They can be due to burns.

Alternative treatments for scars, to help improve the appearance of the scar and skin
Include: [1], [3], [4]

- silicone gel or sheets
- pressure dressings
- corticosteroid injections
- cosmetic camouflage / make-up that's specially designed for covering scars. (This can be purchased from pharmacies)

Human Rights and Equalities Legislation has been consid