

# Information leaflet for people who are considering undergoing scar revision surgery.

Bey By Bergman Clinics – April 2022

In this leaflet, you will read information about scar revision surgery: why and when to undergo the procedure, the consultation, the preparation, the surgery, the period after the procedure, the result, and lastly, the complications and risks that may arise. Your personal situation and options for treatment can only be discussed during a personal conversation. This leaflet serves as preparation and/or addition to your conversation with the plastic surgeon.

## Why and when

If the skin is damaged – for example due to an accident, burns or surgery – a scar will develop during the healing process. Scars usually become lighter in colour and flatter over time (3 to sometimes 18 months). Sometimes scars remain red, become raised (hypertrophic) or extend beyond their original margins and develop excess growth (keloid growth). Scars are more noticeable if they run perpendicular to a skin fold. They are less noticeable if they run parallel to or in a skin fold. The type of wound also affects the appearance. Wounds created by a sharp knife result in a 'nicer' scars than wounds in which the skin was torn.

Some people suffer more from excess scar formation than others. Excess scar formation occurs mainly in people with darker skin or very light skin and reddish hair. In addition, excessive scar formation is more common on certain parts of the body, such as the shoulders and the breastbone. Young people and children often develop more scar tissue.

## Types of scars

Various types of scars exist:

- 'normal' scars: usually light in colour and flat.
- hypertrophic scars: red, thick, often itchy, sometimes tender (painful).
- keloid scars: grow outside the margins of the original wound, can be red to purple in colour, often cause itching and sometimes pain.
- atrophic scars: the has become thinner, sometimes even wrinkled and feels dry.

## Consultation

Many factors play a role in the options for improving the appearance of a scar, such as your skin type, the type of scar and the position of the scar. During a non-binding consultation with the plastic surgeon, you will have the opportunity to discuss your wishes, complaints and questions in detail. He/she will discuss with you whether scar revision surgery will sufficiently resolve your problem. Next, your questions will be answered and he/she will provide the most detailed possible information about the preparation, the procedure, the expected result and the possible complications. After all, you may be disappointed with the result if you go into the procedure with the wrong idea. If the surgeon is not convinced that your problem can be adequately resolved, he/she will discuss this with you, as well. Where possible, the doctor will suggest a different solution (for example a laser treatment of the skin or a treatment using silicone patches). If you wish, you can be referred to a colleague for a second opinion.

Cosmetic surgery is not covered by health insurance. Reimbursement of medically necessary surgery depends on the criteria set by the healthcare insurance company for this procedure. You can consult your healthcare insurance company and/or policy terms and conditions to check these criteria. The specialist cannot deviate from these criteria. The current rules for reimbursement may change in the future.

#### **Your own responsibilities prior to your surgery:**

You should observe a number of preparations in the period prior to your surgery, such as:

- **Stopping blood thinners (anticoagulants):**

You may need to stop taking your blood-thinning medication prior to the surgery. The plastic surgeon will inform you about this. In addition, you attended a pre-operative screening with the anaesthesiology assistant several weeks prior to your surgery, in which your health and the medication policy were discussed. This included a discussion of which blood-thinning medication you need to stop using (temporarily). If your prescribing physician does not approve the temporary discontinuation of blood-thinning medication, then the scheduled surgery cannot take place at Bey by Bergman Clinics.

- **Submit your general medication overview (GMO):**

If you are using medication, this overview can be obtained from your pharmacy. You can also give us permission to share your medication details via the National Exchange Point.

- **Submit the signed Informed Consent Form:**

You will receive this form once your surgery has been scheduled.

- **Pay the invoice according to the terms of payment\*.**

#### **ALCOHOL POLICY:**

- No alcohol for 48 hours before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.

#### **SMOKING POLICY:**

- Smoking has a negative effect on wound healing.
- No smoking for 4 weeks before surgery and 4 weeks after surgery.

#### **NAIL VARNISH POLICY:**

- There is no need to remove nail varnish, gel nails or acrylic nails prior to the surgery.

#### **DRUGS POLICY:**

- Use of drugs like XTC, methamphetamine, heroin or cocaine must be stopped at least 1 week before surgery. This can otherwise cause severe heart rhythm disorders during the operation or reduce the effect of anaesthetics.
- This does not apply to prescription amphetamine use for AD(H)D.
- The same rules as for smoking apply to cannabis.

#### **FASTING POLICY:**

Please refer to the anaesthesiology leaflet for the fasting policy.

#### **If the procedure is to be performed under local anaesthetic:**

- no pre-operative screening will be performed by anaesthesiology
- the fasting policy does not apply

The specialist, anaesthesiology technicians, nursing staff, consultant and treatment app can provide more information if you have any questions.

### Good idea to purchase before the surgery:

- Paracetamol 500 mg, 2 tablets 4x daily
- Naproxen (Aleve) 250 mg 2x daily, if necessary (reduce this pain medication before paracetamol)
- Pantoprazole (gastric protector) 20 mg 1x daily (with use of Naproxen)
- Cotton sanitary pads
- Non-sterile gauze

### The surgery

There are various ways to perform scar revision surgery:

- The scar can be surgically removed and the wound will be sutured. This is followed by post-operative treatment with silicone patches.
- The skin can be stretched by a process called 'tissue expansion'. Once the scar has been removed, the wound is closed with the stretched healthy skin, without causing tension in the wound.
- The skin can be scraped off (dermabrasion).
- Laser therapy.
- Chemical peeling.
- Surgical removal of the scar in combination with radiotherapy. This method is rarely performed.

The type of scar and your skin type will determine whether scar revision surgery is possible and which method is suitable for you. The plastic surgeon will discuss this in detail with you.

- The plastic surgeon will often draw the plan on your body just before surgery, for example the part of the scar that needs to be removed.
- The surgical field will then be disinfected and covered with sterile drapes.
- The scar revision surgery will then be performed under local or general anaesthesia.
- Lastly, the skin is sutured and often the layers below the skin too. If insoluble sutures have been used, these will be removed after 7 to 10 days. Soluble sutures will be absorbed by the body and do not need to be removed.

If you are allowed home, somebody must accompany you home. You may not drive a vehicle yourself. We also recommend that you do not spend the first 24 hours alone at home.

### After the procedure

You will experience some pain after any procedure. This is normal. You can take the prescribed pain medication if you experience any pain. The pain will decrease over the course of a few days. Please contact the number +31 (0)88 9000535 if the pain medication is not sufficient or if the pain increases.

### Recovery period

Starting from the day after the surgery, you may:

- Sleep on your back or side.
- Shower on a daily basis at home.
- Use non-sterile gauze for any oozing of the wound.
- Mobilise according to the pain, listen to your body.
- Increase your activities further each day.
- Resume driving and cycling 1 or 2 weeks after the surgery (this depends on your health insurance company).
- Sauna, bath, swimming pool and exercise after 6 weeks.

You will need to use SPF 30 or 50 sun cream to protect the scars against the sun during the first year. Ask your specialist about any restrictions in your travel plans after your procedure.

You will visit the nurses and the specialist for check-ups after the surgery. We want to remind you that it is important for you to attend these follow-up appointments. This allows the nurse and the medical specialist to monitor the progress of your recovery. They can also offer advice if you have any questions regarding the information provided above.

### **The result**

Scars are often red and stiff during the first few months after scar revision surgery. The plastic surgeon can determine the final result after about one year. The result is usually good. Most people are satisfied with the result of the procedure, because they were given a realistic impression of the achievable result prior to surgery. Sometimes additional procedures may be desirable and required. The plastic surgeon will always discuss the options with you. Perhaps you are not satisfied with the result, for example because you had different expectations. Please be sure to mention this.

### **Complications and risks**

The plastic surgeon always invests a great deal of time, care and personal attention in your treatment. However, complications do unfortunately occur: no procedure is entirely free of the risk of complications. The normal risks of surgery – such as thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, post-op bleeding and wound infection – also apply to this surgery. Specific complications can also occur:

- Post-op bleeding that is heavier than normal can sometimes occur after the surgery. The surgical field will feel extra strained and a lot of blood will seep out. A post-op bleed usually occurs within the first hours after the surgery. If a post-op bleed occurs, then you will require further surgery to remove the excess blood and to stop the bleeding. A post-op bleed can be resolved with further surgery.
- The wound can become infected. This does not happen often. If this does happen, it usually only occurs one or two weeks after the surgery. You can start to feel ill and the wound can open up, causing it to ooze pus and old blood.
- You must contact us if you start to feel ill, if the wound becomes red and/or if you develop a fever.
- Residual swelling and hardening can sometimes be present and may only resolve after weeks or even months.
- There is a small risk of death (necrosis) of the wound edges along the scars. If this occurs, the wound is often left open and needs to be rinsed twice a day until the wound has healed spontaneously.
- The skin in the surgical area and along the scar often has reduced sensation or no sensation at all. This generally does not cause problems. The sensation often recovers partially over the course of the years.
- Sometimes the result is disappointing: the scar becomes thick and wide again. Please be sure to mention this.

### **Always contact us after surgery in the following cases:**

- Significantly increased swelling of the wound or the surgical area
- Pain, if the pain medication does not help or the pain even increases
- Redness and swelling of the wound
- Feeling ill and/or a fever, above 38°C (measured via the anus)
- Persistent nausea
- Acute tightness across the chest
- Acute pain in the leg, possibly with swelling
- Being unable to urinate, whilst drinking normal quantities
- Concerns or doubts

We can be contacted for emergencies 24 hours per day, via +31 (0)88 9000 567.

For non-urgent matters, please call +31 (0)88 9000 535 during office hours.

## **More information**

If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, you can ask your plastic surgeon to answer these questions at any time. You can schedule an appointment for a consultation. You can contact the clinic on telephone number +31 (0)88 9000 535 about this.

## **Complaints and privacy regulations**

Bey by Bergman Clinics has complaints and privacy regulations in place. A copy of these regulations can be obtained from our locations and on our website [www.beyclinics.nl](http://www.beyclinics.nl).

## **Cooling-off period**

Bey by Bergman Clinics acts according to the guidelines of the NVPC and thus implements a 'cooling-off' period. This is the time between the first consultation in which the treatment is proposed and the decision to continue with the treatment. We implement a cooling-off period of one week for a cosmetic surgical procedure.

## **Terms and conditions of payment\***

The first instalment of 25% of the treatment costs must be paid within 5 days after receipt of the invoice. The remainder of the treatment costs should be received by us no later than 4 weeks prior to the surgery date. Cash payments are only possible following agreement with your consultant.

If your surgery has been approved by your healthcare insurance company, then you are responsible for reading the terms and conditions of your insurance policy to check that they will reimburse 100% of the costs of your surgery.

## **Cancellation policy**

You must cancel your surgery in writing. Cancellation within 3 weeks prior to your surgery will result in costs already incurred to the sum of 25% of the costs of surgery being billed to you. Cancellation within 48 hours prior to the agreed date of surgery is only permitted in the case of absolute and demonstrable force majeure.

In all other cases of non-insured care, you will be billed for 100% of the agreed treatment costs. In the case of a treatment that is reimbursed by your healthcare insurance company, your treatment cannot be rescheduled at Bey by Bergman Clinics. The aforementioned cancellation policy also applies if the surgery cannot be performed due to failure on your part to fulfil your responsibilities as listed in this leaflet.

## **Finally**

This leaflet serves as preparation and as a supplement to the conversation with the plastic surgeon and as a 'reference' for the period after the surgery. However, such a description can never apply completely to each individual situation. Plastic and aesthetic surgery is not an exact science; this written information should in no way be construed as a guarantee for the course of events and the result of your procedure.