



## POST-STITCH REMOVAL

### IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOUR STITCHES ARE OUT:

- Your scar will look red and possibly bumpy – this will improve over time now that the stitches are out. The itchiness that you may have been feeling will also improve.
- Avoid trauma to the area. Your scar is only at 5% of its final strength.
- You may apply makeup over the scar the next day.
- You do not need a bandage unless there is some oozing or you want to hide the scar until further healed.
- The redness associated with a scar is normal - it will improve slowly over the next several months. The final appearance of your scar will not become apparent until about 8-12 months.
- Some numbness is normal, and will usually resolve over the next 9-12 months. As it resolves and the nerves are regenerating, you may feel that the healing area has a different sensation. This is normal.
- Occasionally, the dissolving stitches under the skin will surface at the scar. They can be snipped at the surface; do not pull them out unless there is no resistance to doing so. Dissolving stitches take up to 2-3 months before they dissolve, and may cause the scar to get lumpy, bumpy and red at this time. It will resolve, and is normal.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ENSURE YOUR SCAR HEALS ITS BEST:

- Wear sunscreen over the scar (and the rest of your skin) in order to prevent the UV rays from darkening the scar line. It will also help the redness fade better.
- Be gentle with the scar for the few months after getting the stitches out. Excess physical activity that stretches or pulls at the scar can result in it popping open or becoming a wider, less attractive scar.
- After the first month, you may gently begin scar massage, which will further improve its appearance. Use Vaseline or Aquaphor to lubricate the scar, and then use a clean finger to firmly massage the scar in a circular motion along its length. Do this for about 10 minutes several times a day.
- Using Vitamin E or Aloe, has been shown in many studies not to have any added benefit, and sometimes may cause an allergic reaction of the skin resulting in a worse scar appearance. However, the use of silicone gel has been shown to be helpful in overall scar appearance.
- Recognize that scar healing is a dynamic process and many times a second surgical procedure is needed to provide you with the best cosmetic result. If you feel this may be the case for you, please schedule an appointment with us to discuss your options.