



**WATERFRONT**  
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

## SCAR CARE AFTER BREAST AND ABDOMINAL SURGERY

### TAPE – MOISTURISE – PROTECT

#### Week 1

Following breast reduction, breast lift and abdominoplasty, the surgical wounds are closed in 2-3 layers using dissolvable stitches.

Afterwards, the wounds are sealed with tissue glue and surgical tape (steri-strips) and covered by splashproof dressings.



Appearance right after a full tummy tuck. Protective light splashproof dressings are applied—no compression garments.





Appearance right after the completion of breast reduction/lift. Protective light splashproof dressings are applied.

## Week 2

The outer dressings are removed when you return for your first review at around 7 days.

The steri-strips (see below) may be left for another week.



**You can shower** and get the steri-strips wet once the outer dressings have been removed.

**You must remove your steri-strips** at the end of the second week; otherwise, they can cause skin irritation. If the steri-strips are stuck on, you can coat them with Vaseline and wait 30 minutes before peeling them off.



**The appearance of the surgical tape two weeks after a tummy tuck. The scar 18 months later.**

A special type of glue tape may be used on some tummies, which needs to be removed at 3 weeks (again, using Vaseline to help if required).

## Weeks 2-4

You should not apply any moisturiser or bio-oil to the wounds until they are healed and dry.

Shower as normal and only cover any wounds not yet healed. Delayed healing is common, especially with breast surgery.

## 1 month after surgery

### Tape and moisturising

**Remember:** Fresh scars are made of delicate skin that takes months to recover its function.

It needs regular moisturising and protection from irritants.

**Use Micropore 3M tape** 1 month after surgery, assuming all the wounds are healed. **You can keep the tape on in the shower.**



**3M Micropore Skin Tone Surgical Tape**





**Keep the tape on for 3-5 days** (you can still shower with it).

Remove in the shower after 3-5 days and massage the scars with moisturising cream/ bio-oil.

Re-apply the tape **12-24 hours** later. **Repeat this cycle for the next 4 months.**

**In some patients, the micropore tape can cause irritation. If this happens, please stop using it and only moisturise your scars or use silicone tape (see below).**

Abdominoplasty patients: You need not tape the belly button. Regular daily massage with moisturising cream is sufficient.

## **Moisturising creams**

We recommend simple, fragrance-free moisturising creams.

Massage the product around the scars with a gentle, circular motion until it absorbs and is no longer greasy to the touch.

There is little evidence to support the use of creams containing Vitamin E.

Massaging a moisturiser like E45 into the scars will stop them from drying and help make them supple.

Examples of moisturising creams: CeraVe, Aveeno, E45

**Don't use the cream if your scars are cracked or bleeding.**

Try another cream if you experience a burning sensation or itching or notice the formation of pus-filled spots.

Alternatively, you can use bio-oil.

## **Protect your scars from irritants**

**The sun**

**Chlorine**

**Underwired or tight, ill-fitting bras**

## **Silicone tape: an alternative to the 3M tape**

Silicone sheets, cut into narrow strips of variable length, can be used.

**They are expensive with no clear advantage over the 3 M tape.**





Example of Silicone tape applied to the anchor-shaped scars 4 weeks after breast reduction.

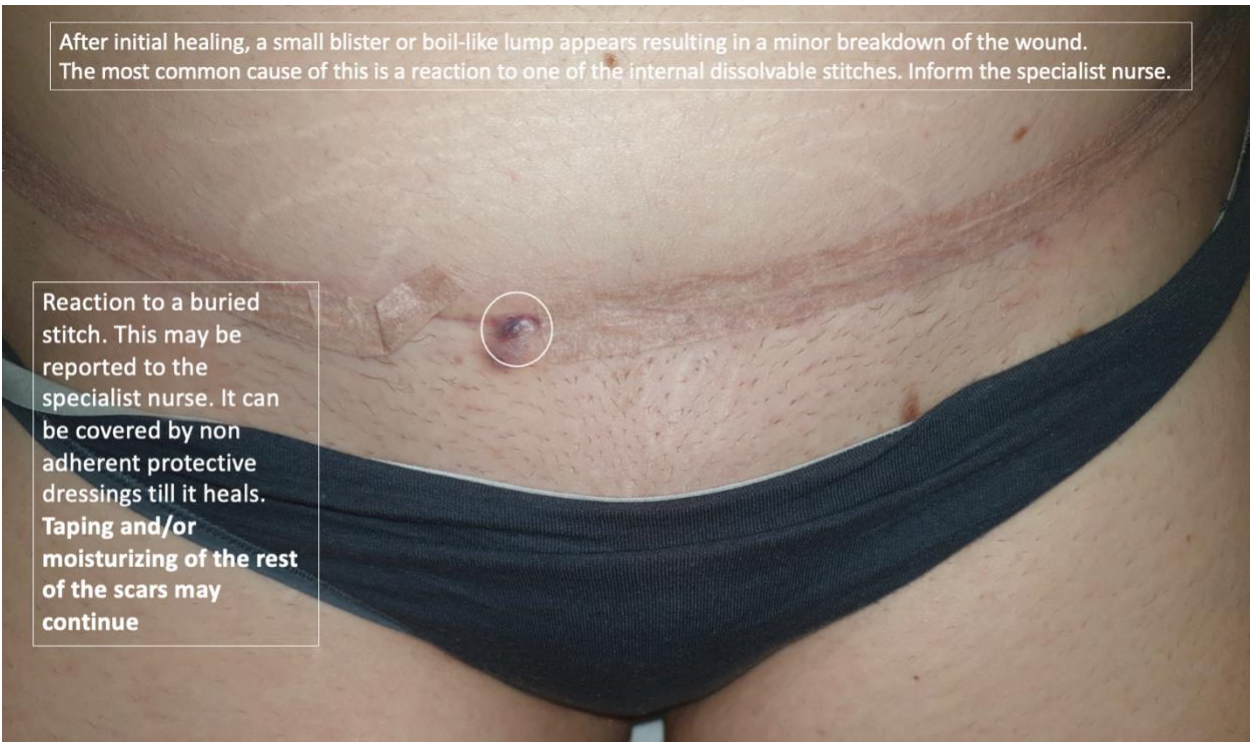
## **Delayed wound healing**

What do we advise when the wounds are not fully healed?

It is not uncommon that parts of the wound are slow to heal or break down after initially healing.



Slow healing at the *T-junction*. Such areas need to be covered by non adherent protective dressings and may take weeks to heal. **Taping and/or moisturizing of the rest of the scars may continue**

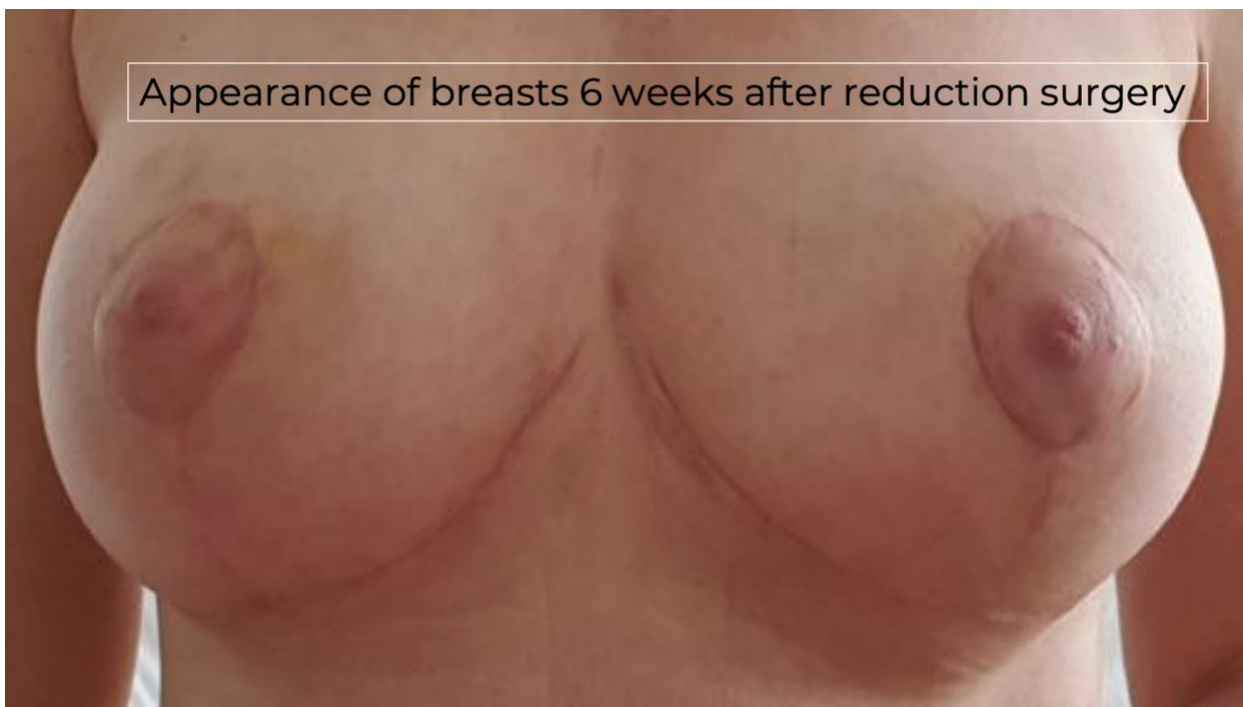


After initial healing, a small blister or boil-like lump appears resulting in a minor breakdown of the wound. The most common cause of this is a reaction to one of the internal dissolvable stitches. Inform the specialist nurse.

Reaction to a buried stitch. This may be reported to the specialist nurse. It can be covered by non adherent protective dressings till it heals. **Taping and/or moisturizing of the rest of the scars may continue**



Appearance of breasts 6 weeks after reduction surgery



**Remember that scars take time to fade.**

**TAPE – MOISTURISE – PROTECT**

**Further advice**

If you are uncertain about anything or require further advice, please contact us at [hello@waterfronthospital.co.uk](mailto:hello@waterfronthospital.co.uk)