

C Section SCAR



Congratulations on the birth of your little one!
If you are reading this then you are likely to have birthed via Caesarean Section (C Section).

You are not alone. According to Public Health Scotland 37.6% of singleton births in the year ending March 2022 were via C Section. This sheet gives you tips and guidance to help you recover.

This is advice only and should not replace any medical advice you have been given. Please contact your midwife or doctor if you have concerns.



EARLY DAYS:

Your body is amazing, and will adapt to a life with a newborn as well as recover from surgery. You can help it by **resting** (when possible), **good nutrition** and **staying hydrated**.

In the early days you will need **pain relief**. Make sure it suits you and is doing its job.

Your scar will have a **dressing** on. The medical team will advise you when to take it off. It is easier to remove it in the **shower or bath**.

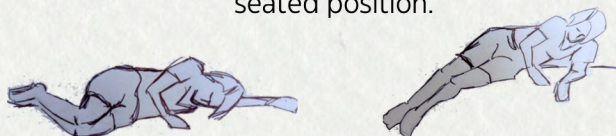
Constipation - a common issue!

- Speak to your GP for laxatives if needed.
- Keep hydrated.
- If appropriate for you then ensure you are eating enough fibre (think dried fruit). Vegetable soups are an excellent source.
- Toilet posture - pop your feet on a stool to get knees just above hips, and lean forward. You may need to hold / support your scar for the first couple of poos after the c section to avoid pressure across it.

Moving in the early days

Move little and often in the early days / weeks. Avoid movement which hurts or strains the lower tummy area / scar. You may need to brace the area when coughing and sneezing in the early days.

Use the log roll technique to get in and out of bed to avoid strain across the scar. Roll onto your side and bring knees up. Use your arms to come to a seated position.



IF THINGS DON'T LOOK OR FEEL RIGHT

It's important you speak to your medical team

- if you feel generally unwell, including high temperature, headaches, feel shivery or if you have tummy / abdominal pain.
- if the post partum bleeding (lochia) becomes heavier, develops an unusual smell, or clots (lumps) become larger and more frequent, or you develop vaginal soreness.
- if your stitches come undone, or if your wound is weeping, has a discharge / smell, becomes tender, red and warm to touch. Don't try and remove any undissolved stitches yourself, speak to your GP.

WOUND HEALING

Your wound should fully heal over between 2-6 weeks.

If it isn't fully closing, or you are getting areas reopening speak to your GP.

Minimise infections by regularly washing hands. Gently wash your wound with mild soap and pat dry with a clean towel or a hair dryer on a low heat / cold setting. If your wound is prone to getting sweaty, then wash / air regularly. Avoid tight clothing across the wound. You may see some stitches fall away and occasionally a lump may develop over a stitch end.

Just because you birthed via surgery, doesn't mean that everything you thought you knew about the post partum period isn't true. Your body will know that you have birthed so your milk will still come in (it may take a little longer), you will still have post partum bleeding (lochia), your hormones can take several weeks, if not months, to settle, your pelvic floor will still need attention.

HELPING YOUR SCAR

C Section scars come in all shapes and sizes, from wiggly lines, straight lines, wavy lines and smiles.

They usually sit just on your bikini line, but some are lower or higher. Sometimes a vertical incision is needed. Your scar is unique to you. Once the scab has come off and the wound is fully healed over here are some great tips for looking after the area:

The single best thing you can do to help your scar is **moisturise** it. Twice daily with unperfumed product or specialist scar cream is best. This helps stimulate the nerves and improves scar healing.

Silicone strips can improve the colour and texture of a scar. These can be worn once the skin has fully healed over and are recommended if you are prone to keloid and hypertrophic (raised) scars.

Dog strokes - treat your tummy as if it were your favourite pet - Gently stroke from belly button down. Even if you are not ready to touch the scar - stroking the area above is still really beneficial.

Did you know that the scar on your skin is not the only healing taking place? There is deeper healing underneath the scar and on the uterus (womb). It is this deeper healing that you need to be aware of, and the reason why we shouldn't over do things in the early days / weeks.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS

- Scar may feel **tight** but shouldn't be painful.
- Many experience **numbness** especially in the area directly above the scar. This should improve.
- Area above may form a '**pouch**', although this is often a combination of factors, scar tissue can contribute.
- The scar and the area above may feel **tingly and itchy**. This is normal and a sign of the nerves regenerating.
- Gentle **scar massage** can help with these and feeling connected to the area.

Many women find that the scar gives them the '**heebie jeebies**' and have a feeling of disconnect. This is perfectly normal, and can take time for the area to feel part of you again. Try moisturising as a way of 'purposefully' interacting with the area, or getting your partner to gently stroke the tummy and scar. A Scar Therapy treatment can help with these unwanted feelings.

When **negative feelings** around your birth story become more **intrusive**, and are not lessening with time, seek help, either through the hospital, GP or private practitioner. Check the below site for info:
<https://traumaticbirthrecovery.com/>

SCAR MASSAGE

The scar and the surrounding tissue will take around 18-24 months to fully mature. Massage can help the long term outcomes of the scar

Massaging should be intuitive - don't overthink it!

- If you have lost sensation, start above the scar where there is full feeling. Work gradually down using the same pressure. Go GENTLY.
- Softly press the skin onto the tissues below and move these tissues exploring the area.
- If it feels uncomfortable or painful, stop.

SCAR THERAPY

As a Scar Work practitioner I can help with many aspects of your healing journey:

- Improve the look and feel of the scar and the surrounding tissues.
- Help you feel confident touching and interacting with your scar.
- Reduce discomfort which you may feel with certain movements.
- Scar may contribute to lower back pain, bladder and bowel issues, or pain during intercourse.
- Allow the area to feel like you again.
- Potentially help with the emotional side of your birth story.

More info on my services can be found at
www.SamMassageTherapy.co.uk
or book directly for your scar consultation & treatment:

Book via: <https://sam-massage-therapy.uk1.cliniko.com/bookings>