A Place for Stretch Marks and Scar Management

Building Aftercare into Patient Consultations

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Aims of the session

1. Provide – Stretch mark and scar support
2. Insight – Psychological impact
3. Share – Expert tips
4. Guidance – Practical advice and resources
5. Empower – Self-care
6. Treatment – Solutions
Where do we come in?

1. Do you currently offer stretch mark management advice? when and what advice during surgery? What form of advice do you offer?

2. Do you have stretch marks and does it affect you or make you self-conscious?
Scars and Stretch Marks - Psychological Impact?

- Almost two thirds of women said that their scar has affected their body confidence\(^1\)

- One in two women suffer ongoing psychological issues due to stretch marks and scarring\(^2\)
  - Mums can feel psychologically confused

- One in 10 people feel isolated as a result of their scar\(^1\)
  - There are consequences if psychological needs are not met

- Emotional support and physical support are equally important
Body Image and Pregnancy

Body image concerns are widespread

60% of new mums not prepared for the skin and body changes they experienced

70% of new mums think women need to be given better advice and support about their post-pregnancy bodies
Mums’ top concerns post-birth are:

- Stretch marks: 42.50%
- Weight gain: 40%
- Body shape: 30%
- Breast size: 15%
A Focus on Stretch Marks (Striae)\(^4\)

**Stage 1:** Early stretch marks appear pale in colour, and also may be itchy

**Stage 2:** Gradually, the stretch marks will enlarge in length and width, and become darker and more pronounced

**Stage 3:** Once matured, stretch marks will start to fade and may appear slightly depressed and irregular in shape

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**Stretch marks during pregnancy**

- **8 out of 10** women get stretch marks during pregnancy (7 out of 10 girls and 4 out of 10 boys get them during puberty).\(^4\)

- Stretch marks occur during periods of rapid growth such as pregnancy, puberty and weight gain.\(^4\)

- Risk factors include higher BMI, age and race.\(^5\)
A Focus on Scarring

Three areas of focus for managing patients with scarring:

- **Inform/reassure**
  - Explain the patient’s scar type, as well as the healing process

- **Encourage self-care**
  - Advise the patient to keep the wound covered

- **Refer to further information**
  - Provide suggestions for further reading and support
Case Study

Lavinia
First time pregnant with 1 fetus, very healthy, fit and works as a personal trainer. White European presented to me at 24 weeks pregnant with extreme itching to her breasts and abdomen.

Approach
Physical – examined abdomen & breasts
• Showed generalised redness, sore where scratched, generalised striae

Psychological – how she felt about her body
• Felt self-conscious where she had not before, affected relationship with her partner.

Treatment
• Psychoeducational – why they occur
• Advised cool clothing
• Daily massage
How Do We Help?

- Learn about body image and its impact on maternal and infant wellbeing
- Model diversity
- Be mindful of language
- Talk to women about body image
- Act on concerns
- Share your experiences

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# Postpartum Recovery Timeline: Managing Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Physiological change</th>
<th>Visual change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st day post birth</td>
<td>Reduction in size of uterus, palpated around the umbilicus</td>
<td>Abdomen feels soft and spongy, vaginal loss bloody, wearing pads</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lochia rubra</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd-5th day post birth</td>
<td>Uterus well contracted at 3 fingerbreadths under umbilicus</td>
<td>Abdomen still soft, uterus feels firm, vaginal loss much less heavy when</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lochia serosa</td>
<td>moving around, wearing pads, ankles look puffy and swollen, breasts tender,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leg oedema</td>
<td>hot and swollen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breasts enlargement milk production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th day post birth</td>
<td>Uterus just palpable at symphysis pubis</td>
<td>Abdominal tissue feels firmer, vaginal loss more settled and like a discharge,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lochia alba</td>
<td>wear a liner, breasts changing constantly when feeding, wearing breast pads</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breasts lactating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th day post birth</td>
<td>Uterus not palpable</td>
<td>Abdomen firmer and more resistant, breasts more normal in size, wear pads if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breasts lactating</td>
<td>breastfeeding, walking around with baby, doing tasks, tiredness and lack of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General body tone firmer</td>
<td>energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep pattern changed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 months post birth</td>
<td>Still has some post pregnancy weight to lose</td>
<td>Some routine established, finding difficult to eat regularly between caring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breastfeeding on demand</td>
<td>for baby, breastfeeding exclusively, wearing pads, some nights where baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>sleeps through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months post birth</td>
<td>Body shape slowly returning to previous functions</td>
<td>Has more energy to walk and get out of house, meet other mothers, confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breasts still lactating</td>
<td>better, baby started to wean, managing to eat at regular intervals, baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diet normal</td>
<td>sleeping through night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months post birth</td>
<td>All body functions and physiological changes are now as pre-birth</td>
<td>Adapted to motherhood, back at work, enjoying family life, confidence normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Raising the Subject with Patients

- Patients may be reluctant to raise the subject of scarring and stretch marks themselves

- Midwives can help patients talk about a sensitive issue

- Offering reassuring advice

 Reactive- SCAR
- Site
- Category
- Age
- Reassure

Proactive – early intervention
- Pre-operative care
Managing Scarring in Primary Care

SITE & SKIN TYPE
Identify whether scar is on a mobility area and if the location of the scar or patient's skin type is likely to produce abnormal or worse scarring.

CATEGORY
Is it keloid, hypertrophic, atrophic or contracture scar?

AGE
Is the scar new, still maturing or fully matured?

REASSURE & RECOMMEND
Help alleviate psychological worry by reassuring patient of commonness of scarring and that scars improve over time with the skin's natural regeneration process. Recommend treatment options.

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C.A.R.E. for your scar

CONNECT & CONTACT
Managing your scar(s) twice a day can help to stimulate the repair process and help you connect with the scar emotionally.

APPLICATION
Wait until your wound has fully healed and allow 4 weeks after any stitches have been removed before you start to apply Bio-Oil. To apply, massage in a small amount until it has been fully absorbed.

REGULAR
You need to be dedicated and ensure you regularly massage and moisturize your scar twice a day for at least 3 months. This will help to speed up the skin’s natural regeneration process.

EXPECTATION
If you are in the care of a nurse or surgeon, ask them how long your scar(s) will take to heal and how you should expect it to look and feel as it heals. Alternatively, your local pharmacist can help with advice and recommend useful websites for further information.

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NMC Revalidation

- Improve your knowledge of scar aftercare and claim **NMC revalidation**

- Complete the **free module** ‘Management of Patients with Scarring in Primary Care’

- The module is authored by Dermatology Specialist Nurse, Julie Van Onselen, and counts towards as NMC revalidation

- Available free on the Bio-Oil Professional website: [www.bio-oilprofessional.co.uk](http://www.bio-oilprofessional.co.uk)
The new patient booklet resource, which is available free to download via the Bio-Oil Professional website, addresses key areas including:

- ‘About you’ patient note page for tailored healthcare professional advice
- The psychological and social impact of scars
- The types of scars, their appearance and how they mature
- The stages of scar formation with an explanation of the healing process
- How to minimise the appearance of scars with practical tips for self-care
- Scar management advice from experts including a dermatologist, psychologist and a patient

Created with help from dermatologist, Justine Hextall, and insights from a real patient, Jo Kelly, to ensure that it was patient friendly.
Educational hub of information

Training and resources available for you:

www.bio-oilprofessional.co.uk
About Bio-Oil

✓ A specialist skincare treatment for scars, stretch marks and dehydrated skin

✓ Suitable for all skin types and tested for sensitive skin

✓ Underpinned by clinical research*

✓ Skin Health Alliance approved

✓ Available in pharmacies nationwide

✓ Dry oil formula rapidly absorbed into the skin without leaving a greasy residue

*92% saw an improvement in the appearance of their scars after 8 weeks
*95% saw an improvement in the appearance of their stretch marks after 2 weeks
Get a free bottle of Bio-Oil today!

Please text SEM and your name, email address and occupation to: **81025**

**Example text:**

SEM Your name **youremail@example.com**
Your occupation

You will receive a message entitling you to a free 60ml bottle and your email address will be added to our database to receive the latest information from Bio-Oil.

Show the message at Bio-Oil redemption stand no. **19** and you will receive a 60ml sample worth £8.95.
Discussion / Q&A

- Have you ever considered the need to broach the subject of scarring and stretch marks with patients? What would stop you?

- Do you feel that patients need support in this area?

- What resources do you think would help you to help patients?

- Would you find online training useful?
References

1. Survey of 1,000 UK people with scarring conducted by Opinion Health on behalf of Bio-Oil. February 2016.
2. 2One Poll online survey amongst 7,000 UK women commissioned by Bio-Oil for their Body Confidence Report. 2012
4. NHS Choices. Stretch marks. Available at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/Stretch-marks/Pages/Introduction.aspx