Scar Revision and Treatment of Acne Scars

Acne is a common skin condition, especially among teenagers. However, not everyone develops the scarring that can occur after outbreaks, and it can be almost impossible to predict which patients will scar. Because there are many ways to treat acne scarring, it is important that patients choose a cosmetic surgeon who is skilled at a wide variety of procedures. Likewise, other types of scars can be very difficult to manage and improve, and choosing the right physician is an important step towards clinical success.

There are many different types of acne scars. Deep pits that develop following an acne lesion are called “ice pick scars”, and are a classic sign of acne scarring. Angular scars (boxcar scars) usually occur on the temple and cheeks, and can be either superficial or deep. Scars that give the skin an undulating appearance are known as “rolling scars”. Many patients require a combination of treatments for the best results.

Our physicians are recognized world leaders in the management of scars. Because each patient is unique, it requires a special set of skills to properly evaluate and manage patients with scars. SkinCare Physicians has the most recent and innovative techniques and equipment needed to treat our patients. The physicians and staff will carefully evaluate your skin and develop a comprehensive treatment program. In some cases, several physicians with varied areas of expertise are needed to maximally improve your skin. This is particularly true with scars. One of the advantages of coming to SkinCare Physicians is that our physicians have the expertise and work together, often on the same day, to provide you with the most complete care available.

Scar Revision

Traumatic, accidental, old and new scars can often benefit from surgical intervention. Available treatments include surgical revision and excision, laser therapy, and intralesional or topical therapy. For many patients, a combination approach is indicated. Some scars may not improve significantly with treatment, and our staff will take the time to explain to you the possible risks and benefits of treatment, as well as the likelihood of success. Fortunately, most scars will improve with intervention, and the results can sometimes be amazing.

Rolling Acne Scars

Rolling scars are the subtle or sometimes pronounced undulations that occur in acne prone skin. These are often the scars that are most noticeable in varying types of room lighting. Injection with soft tissue fillers such as Restylane may provide temporary relief from rolling scars. In addition to Restylane, other injectable substances such as Silicone and Collagen can be used to improve the appearance of depressed scars. For this reason, it is often best to use this therapy in combination with other cosmetic procedures. Subcision is a relatively new technique that is also quite successful at improving soft, depressed scars. These types of scars can be a challenge to treat, and it is important to choose surgeons skilled in many different procedures to maximize your treatment options. Scars may also be significantly improved with non-invasive lasers (Cool Touch II, Smooth Beam) and fractional resurfacing with the Fraxel laser. These non-invasive lasers have been a dramatic advance in our ability to improve scars. They require little after care, no needles and can often produce dramatic results.
**Boxcar Acne Scars**

Boxcar scars are usually small, clearly defined indentations in the skin. They occur all over the face, most notably on the temples and cheeks. Treatment of shallow boxcar scars can be accomplished with laser skin resurfacing, but deeper boxcar scars are best removed surgically. Direct excision with suturing, as well as elevation of the scar with use of a surgical adhesive to fix the newly flattened scar in place, are just two of the many treatment options available. Boxcar scars also often respond well to Smooth Beam, Cool Touch and Fraxel laser treatments. Various techniques are available to your surgeon, and our team of physicians will work together to develop a comprehensive treatment plan for acne scars.

**Ice Pick Acne Scars**

There is really only one successful treatment for ice pick scars: surgical removal. As many as 15-20 scars can be removed in one session. Following the surgical removal of ice pick scars, most patients benefit from skin resurfacing using one of several lasers. The laser treatments result in soft, smooth, unscarred skin by removing surface layers of the skin. The laser treatment is usually performed 6 to 12 weeks after surgical removal of the scars so that the area where the scars have been removed will improve maximally. Occasionally, the surgical excision of the scars is performed immediately after laser resurfacing. Patients notice a dramatic improvement 4 to 6 weeks after the procedure.

**Laser Resurfacing for Acne Scars**

Laser resurfacing is one of the most useful techniques in the treatment of acne scarring. With this procedure, thin layers of skin are removed, layer after layer, until the scars improve or disappear. At the same time the skin tightens to help smooth out the scars. Laser resurfacing is often combined with one or several other treatments for acne scars, and this combination approach consistently yields superior results compared to other therapies. In most cases, the surgical treatment of scars is completed prior to laser resurfacing. The laser treatment is scheduled 6 to 12 weeks after the last surgical treatment to allow your skin time to heal and remodel. Laser resurfacing is superb for treating shallow boxcar scars, as well as for smoothing and tightening scars that have been treated with other surgical modalities such as subcision and excision. For more information about laser resurfacing, see the “Laser Skin Resurfacing” brochure insert. For individuals who are interested in laser treatment of acne scars, but are interested in a less invasive procedure, non-ablative resurfacing with either the Cool Touch, Smooth Beam or Fraxel lasers offers the potential for significant improvement.

**Fractional Laser Resurfacing**

Fractional laser resurfacing with the Fraxel laser works similarly to laser resurfacing but the procedure is gentler, less involved and has a shorter downtime after treatment. Performed as a series of five or six treatments about once a month, Fraxel laser treatment helps to smooth acne scars and fine to moderate wrinkles. Sunburn-like redness and swelling for a day or two are usually the only after effects of this exciting new procedure.
At SkinCare Physicians, our patients are fortunate to have access to the best of all worlds. Our surgeons are experts at removing deeper scars and making them dramatically less noticeable. We also have on staff some of the world’s leading laser resurfacing experts who can improve or remove the scars that remain. This combination approach yields results that are consistently excellent, setting a new standard of care in this area.

About SkinCare Physicians

SkinCare Physicians is a comprehensive state-of-the-art center for cosmetic and laser surgery, dermatology, dermatologic and skin cancer surgery, and medical aesthetics. The center’s founders and their associates are internationally renowned innovators and leaders in all of these fields. They are authors, or co-authors, of more than 700 articles in scientific publications, authors or editors of more than 50 books, editors of 18 medical journals and serve on editorial boards of 14 additional periodicals. Our physicians have been elected or appointed to senior leadership positions in dermatology, cosmetic surgery, laser medicine, and surgery organizations, and have been awarded honorary memberships in many national and international medical and scientific societies.

Our commitment to excellence, along with the credentials of our skilled physicians and staff, are what make SkinCare Physicians one of the most unique and progressive facilities of its kind in the world.