

Alan Pang, M.D.

What procedures were used for scarring before this technology?

0:06

Scar management was largely done at bedside or in our homes with things like scar massage, where we press on the scar fairly aggressively, which can very slowly help those scars to soften up. We also use silicone bandages. We don't quite know exactly how they work, but we know that they work also kind of a slow time frame in terms of softening scar and then also compression garments, to same concept of putting pressure on those wounds. We still use all of those techniques. We just it's not the only thing in our arsenal anymore.

Can you explain what this procedure is and how it's done?

0:44

Yeah, so we have a large laser machine that has a hand piece, and when we have hypertrophic scarring, where the scar is so thick that it can restrict our range of motion and our normal function during our life, or if there's pain or itching associated with it. We can take this laser and we can treat these scars by firing small holes into the scar tissue, and that causes our body to rearrange that collagen to kind of be softer.

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1:17

But also, scar tissue is like cement, and it can hold on to some of those nerve endings which can cause pain and itching, and so sometimes softening that scar will allow it to let go of those nerve endings.

How long does it take to notice the results?

1:30

That rearrangement takes anywhere from four to six weeks, so long after you've healed is when you would notice the effects of your therapy.

Is this an operation or can it be done in a clinic?

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There are some places to do it. In the clinic. We do it in the operating room. It can be very painful, so we sedate patients in the operating room and we perform the procedure, and then we wake them up and send them home the same day.

Is this procedure used for the physical aspects or more for pain management?

1:53

It can be for both we've had patients who have great success with gaining their range of motion back when they have thick scarring over joints or other functional areas. But we also have a

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good number of patients who had really bad itching or really bad pain, and after softening some of that scar, that pain and itching resolves.

What kind of scarring is this done on?

2:13

Really any kind of scarring. Largely, we do burn patients because that's who we work with in the inpatient setting, but we get patients with post operative scarring. If you've had some kind of surgery where they made an incision and now the scarring is hypertrophic or thick. We have patients who suffer a variety of injuries, as long as, basically, your skin is injured and you end up scarring. We can treat those patients.

What happens after the procedure is done? How many treatments should be expected?

2:37

It is a same day procedure where you come in in the morning, we put you to sleep, do the procedure and send you home the same day. The recovery essentially, you might see some small spots where we burn those holes, but those largely resolve over time. You'll have some soreness for a couple days. We send you home with some pain ointment and some pain pills to get you through that acute period, and then we actually see you back four to six weeks later, because you won't notice a difference for three or four weeks or so, and we want to make sure you notice that difference before we sign you up for another laser session. Most patients get the outcome that they're desiring after four to six treatments of one area. But we can always do it more. We can do it less. There's no restriction on how much you can do it, as long as there's still scar tissue.