



St John's Institute of Dermatology

Scratch monitoring

This leaflet explains how to monitor your scratching behaviour (which is different to the sensation of an itch). This is the first of two leaflets that offer support on how to reduce habitual scratching. The second leaflet is called 'Habit reversal to reduce scratching and promote skin healing', please ask for a copy if you have not already.

If you have any further questions, please speak to the doctor, nurse or psychologist caring for you.

What is scratch monitoring?

Scratch monitoring is the recording of your usual scratching behaviour. This includes all situations and activities associated with scratching and how often scratching occurs.

Why should I monitor my scratching?

This is to help you to become more aware of habitual (regular) and unconscious scratching, and to identify when and where you scratch most often.

How to carry out scratch monitoring

Scratching on your skin might include using your nails, rubbing with hands, using clothes/the edge of objects, or someone else scratching you.

Scratch monitoring occurs for one week. Do not avoid scratching during this period.

To carry out your scratch monitoring, please follow these simple steps:

- Click on the hand-held tally counter every time you scratch, touch, rub or pick your skin.
- One scratching episode equals one click. If you use both hands to scratch, click twice.
- At the end of each day enter the day/ date and the total number of scratches for that day in the table on the next page, and then set the counter back to zero for the next day.
- Continue to follow your skin care plan.

For further advice, please speak to the doctor, nurse or psychologist caring for you in the dermatology department.