

Supporting your child after a burn injury

Children's Services

Information for parents and carers of young children

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Introduction

The information in this leaflet will help you to manage your child's burn injury at home.

What is a burn?

A burn is an injury to the skin primarily caused by heat or due to radiation, radioactivity, electricity, friction or contact with chemicals.

Burns occur when some or all the cells in the skin or other tissues are destroyed by:

- Hot liquids (scalds)
- Hot solids (contact burns)
- Flames (flame burns).

Types of burn?

Burns are assessed by how seriously your child's skin is damaged and which layers of skin are affected.

Your skin has 3 layers:

The epidermis – the outer layer of skin.

The dermis – the layer of tissue just beneath, which contains blood capillaries, nerve endings, sweat glands and hair follicles.

The subcutaneous fat, or subcutis – the deeper layer of fat and tissue.

There are 4 main types of burn, which tend to have a different appearance and different symptoms:

Superficial epidermal burn – where the epidermis is damaged; your skin will be red, slightly swollen and painful, but not blistered.

Superficial dermal burn – where the epidermis and part of the dermis are damaged; your skin will be pale pink and painful, and there may be small blisters.

Deep dermal or partial thickness burn – where the epidermis and the dermis are damaged; this type of burn makes your skin turn red and blotchy; your skin may be dry or moist and become swollen and blistered, and it may be very painful or painless.

Full thickness burn – where all 3 layers of skin (the epidermis, dermis and subcutis) are damaged; the skin is often burnt away and the tissue underneath may appear pale or blackened, while the remaining skin will be dry and white, brown or black with no blisters. The texture of the skin may also be leathery or waxy. It may also be painless.

How should I help my child cope with pain?

Burns can be very painful. It is important to give your child regular pain medication. This may be painkillers that have been prescribed and given to you at the hospital or that you have purchased over the counter. Please check the dose on the bottle carefully.

Pain control and comfort during your child's treatment is important to us. If your child needs further dressing changes we advise that you give your child some painkillers 30-45 minutes before their appointment time. This can help with any discomfort associated with their dressing change.

What should I do if my child becomes unwell at home?

Very rarely a child may become unwell with a burn injury of any size.

Toxic Shock Syndrome is a serious but uncommon infection after a burn that can make a person feel really poorly very quickly.

It is uncommon but it is important that you observe your child and phone your G.P. or **111** Urgent Health telephone advice service if they experience any of the following symptoms as you may need to come back to hospital for your child to see a doctor:

- High temperature
- Rash
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- If she or he goes off their food and drink
- If she or he becomes very sleepy
- Not passing urine

However, if your child is extremely unwell or you are very worried about their condition seek help immediately; take your child to the nearest Emergency Department or call 999.

How will my child’s dressing’s be managed?

Your child will have a dressing covering their burn in order to protect the area. A dressing is needed until the burn is fully healed and it will need to be changed regularly.

Your nurse or doctor will discuss this with you and advise you of the frequency of the dressing changes and who you will need to see.

You can use the box below to write this down.

Appointment times

Date	Time	Where for example, G.P.

Please try to keep your child’s dressings clean and dry and leave the bandages in place until your next dressing change appointment.

You will need to phone the Community Children’s Nursing Service for dressing changes if any of the following problems arise:

- The dressing becomes too tight
- The dressing becomes dirty or wet
- The dressing becomes loose or falls off

- If the wound fluid leaks through the dressing
- If the dressing becomes smelly or looks green
- Your child is in pain that is not relieved by medication.

The area that has been burned will become swollen.

If your child has burnt their hand, arm, foot or leg, when resting it may help to keep the area elevated to reduce or prevent swelling.

Exercise will also help to reduce swelling and stop the burned area getting stiff. Please do any exercises as instructed by a physiotherapist, nurse or doctor.

You can help manage your child's dressing changes by:

- Preparing for any pain and discomfort; painkillers before appointment
- Taking favourite toys or activities to help with distraction

If you or your child has any worries about dressing changes please discuss this with the nurse or doctor caring for your child.

Emotions and Behaviour

Even small burn injuries can be very distressing for children and their parents or carers. Some children may have nightmares or be "clingy". You or your child may avoid places and things that remind you or your child of the accident or injury. Your child may be anxious about medical procedures.

These reactions are common, and often fade within a month or so. You can help by taking your child's concerns seriously, while calmly encouraging a return to normal life.

If problems persist and disrupt normal life, please discuss this with the nurse or doctor caring for your child or your health visitor or school nurse. If needed, you can seek further advice from staff in the local Burns Service at Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Food and Drink

Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.

To help the skin heal your child will need to eat more protein and vitamins. These can be found in food such as:

Milk, yoghurts, custard, meat, fish, cheese, eggs and fresh fruit and vegetables.

What to expect my child's skin to look like after its healed

Skin colour (pigmentation) is determined by the amount melanin (brown pigment) in the top layer of the skin. When skin is burned, the pigment is temporarily destroyed. Over the following few months, the pigment will slowly return and begin to look similar to your surrounding skin. This is a long and slow process that can take up to 2 years. Some pigment may never return and the skin will stay lighter. Some areas may return to a darker colour than before.

How protect your child's skin from the sun care after a burn.

Exposure to sunlight (UVA/UVB rays) is harmful to skin. After a burn injury, the affected skin is even more vulnerable to the harmful effects of the sun. Sun exposure can cause discolouration (hyperpigmentation) to your scars. You must take extra care whilst out in the sun for at least 2 years whilst your scars mature. We recommend that you:

- Don't sunbathe
- Avoid directly exposing the affected area to the sun
- Cover up with clothing and remember that most clothing isn't sun-proof. SPF sun suits are available for children
- Wear a sun hat or cap if you have burns to the face, head or neck
- Use SPF 30 to 50 cream/ lotion/ spray.

How to protect your child's skin once the burn has healed.

When your child no longer requires dressing you can protect your child's new healthy skin by applying non-scented moisturiser, preferably oil enriched, once daily for 1 year.

What should I do if my child's scar is itching?

Moisturising the area 2-3 times daily can help with any itching.

Creams can be kept in the fridge so they are cool on application.

Wearing cotton clothing over the affected area has been found to be beneficial.

Ensure the room your child is in is cool.

Use cotton bedding that hasn't been washed in strong detergents.

Contact Details and Additional Information

Wolverhampton Community Children's Nursing service:

Monday – Friday between the hours of 0800-1800
contact: 01902 444700.

If no one is available to answer your call, please leave a message on the answerphone with your child's name and Date of birth, we will return your call as soon as possible.

Saturday – Sunday between the hours of 0800-1800 contact:

New Cross Hospital switch board on 01902 307999, ask for the Children's Community Children's Nurse on call.

Outside of these hours please seek advice from 111 or attend your local urgent care centres

Support Groups

Children's Burn Trust

Phone no: 020 7233 8333 / www.cbtrust.org.uk

Enzo's friends

A support group based in Burns Centre at Birmingham Children's Hospital: www.enzosfriends.com

Reference

Young, A. and Thornton, K. (2007). Toxic shock syndrome in burns: diagnosis and management. Archives of Disease in Childhood Education and Practice. 92 (4). P.p. 97-100.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/burns-and-scalds/>

This leaflet has been recreated using information from the Midlands Burns Advice

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。