



Burns Unit

Burns aftercare

Information for young people, parents and carers

Washing, Moisturising and Massage

After a burn or scald injury the glands that produce the skin's natural oils have been damaged so these oils need replacing to keep the skin soft and supple. When burns dressings are no longer required, the following washing, moisturising and massaging techniques will help the affected area(s):

- Wash area two-three times a day for five minutes each time. A non-perfumed and non-coloured soap should be used.
- Pat the area dry with a clean towel and apply a non-scented moisturiser.
- Use gentle pressure with the index and middle finger to massage the area in small circles. When the area/scar changes colour from pink to white when being massaged the correct pressure has been applied.
- If required, after each episode of cleaning continue the pressure garments should be worn as advised.

Massaging the moisturiser into the affected area using light pressure helps to improve the texture of the scar and helps to prevent raised scar tissues known as hypertrophic scarring.

Itching

Itching is very common following a burn or scald injury. There can be some comfort given if the instructions below are followed:

- Bathing in cool but not cold water.
- Wear cotton clothing over the affected area. Avoid wearing wool and nylon as they can irritate the skin.
- Use cotton bedding.

If none of the above work, your doctor can prescribe medicine that will reduce the itching. Antihistamines can help to reduce symptoms and can be purchased at the local chemist.

Skin Breakdown

Small areas of skin breakdown/blisters can occur from friction, pressure or infections. Poor moisturising technique or poor skin hygiene can leave raw areas that may need dressing. This problem occurs in burn injuries, but will heal in time if taken care of. Small blisters may also appear. This is quite common and the blistering usually stops after six months.

Exercise

After skin has been injured by a burn or scald it can become less flexible and needs to be cared for and exercised to make sure normal movements are not affected. Exercises



should be carried out frequently throughout the day to prevent stiffness. This can be achieved by using limbs normally e.g. getting washed and dressed and doing daily activities. Activities such as playing, feeding themselves or bathing will distract children from realising they are exercising.

If movement is painful make sure enough pain relief has been taken or try to time activities to 30 minutes after taking pain relief.

Ongoing Skin Care/Sun Protection

Healed burns and scars will need extra protection for up to two years. This is because exposure to the sun can very easily damage newly healed skin, causing blistering and risk of permanent colour change. To prevent this:

- Wear clothing that protects the scar.
- Use sun cream (SPF 50+) or total sun block.
- Stay in the shade when outdoors.
- Avoid sunbeds.

Initially new skin may also be more sensitive to cold and it is important to keep those areas warm in cold weather. Too much heat can also cause itchiness and irritation to healed areas.

You may notice that the scar is a different colour from the skin. The different colour will fade eventually, but could take up to two years or longer. A scar may never disappear but can become less noticeable.

For some children and young people a referral may be made to scar management clinics at a later stage.

For further Information

Contact Burns Unit (Ward 1B) Tel: 0151 252 5400

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
Eaton Road
Liverpool
L12 2AP
Tel: 0151 228 4811
www.alderhey.nhs.uk

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