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Caring for your child after their burn injury

***Information for
parents and carers***



Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital

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

Appointment times

| Date | Time | Place (such as GP surgery, clinic) |
|-------------|-------------|---|
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Helping your child cope with pain

Burns can be very painful. It's important to give your child regular pain medication. This may be painkillers that the hospital has prescribed and given to you or painkillers that you've bought over the counter. Please check the dose on the bottle or packet 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 them some painkillers 30 to 45 minutes before their appointment time. This can help with any discomfort related to their dressing change.

If your child becomes unwell

Very rarely a child may become unwell after a burn of any size. There is a condition called Toxic Shock Syndrome, which is a serious but uncommon infection after a burn that can make a person very poorly very quickly.

It's uncommon but it's important that if your child has any of the symptoms below you take them **immediately to the Children's Accident and Emergency Department** as they may need further treatment:

- High temperature
- Rash
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- If they go off their food and drink
- If they become very sleepy
- Not passing urine
- They have to work harder to breathe.

If your child is extremely unwell call 999 immediately.

Dressings

When they leave hospital, your child will have a dressing covering their burn to protect the area. A dressing is needed until the burn is fully healed and will need to be changed regularly.

Your nurse / doctor will discuss this with you and advise how often the dressing needs changed and who will change it (for example the Dressings Clinic, your GP or your practice nurse).

You can use the table inside the front cover of this leaflet to write this information down.

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

Is there anything we need to look out for?

Please phone the Children's Accident and Emergency Department if your child has any of the following problems:

- 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

Going to have dressings changed

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

- Taking favourite toys/activities to distract your child while their dressing is being changed.
- Preparing for any pain and discomfort. You can give your child some painkillers 30 to 45 minutes before their appointment time. This can help with any discomfort related to their dressing change.

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

What should we do as my child recovers?

The burned area will become swollen. This is part of the normal healing process.

If your child has burnt their hand/arm or foot/leg, keeping the area raised when they're resting can 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 the occupational therapist, nurse or doctor.

Emotions and behaviour after a burn

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 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/doctor caring for your child or your Health Visitor / School Nurse. If needed, they can get further advice from staff in the local Burns Team at the 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
- yogurts
- custard
- meat
- fish
- cheese
- eggs
- fresh fruit
- vegetables.

Contact us

If you have any concerns about your child's burns, please contact:

Accident and Emergency Department

Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital

 01224 552041

**This leaflet is also available in large print.
Other formats and languages can be
supplied on request. Please call Quality
Development on 01224 554149 for a copy.
Ask for leaflet 1616.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet.
If you have any comments on how we can improve it,
please call 01224 554149 to let us know.