

Burns: Long Term Care

Your child's burn wounds have healed with new skin. Dressings are no longer needed. The burns will continue to change as they heal over time. It could take up to two years. The healing skin is more fragile and sensitive. It is important to protect the skin as it heals. This may help decrease scarring.

Lotion and massage

- Lotion moistens the skin to relieve itching and dryness. Massage helps the skin be able to expand or stretch. Use lotion and massage together to keep thick scar tissue from forming.
- Use a lotion that is mild and non-irritating. It should not have fragrance or perfume. Examples: Eucerin[®], Nivea[®], Cocoa Butter, Keri[®] Lotion and Aquaphor[®].
- Put lotion on three times a day for the next 6 months. When you put the lotion on, massage it into the skin.
 - Massage by using your thumb or finger to make small circles. Use more pressure as healing progresses.
 - Use firm, deep pressure in circles, back and forth, and up and down.
 - Massage each part of the body that was burned for 5 to 10 minutes (**figure 1**).

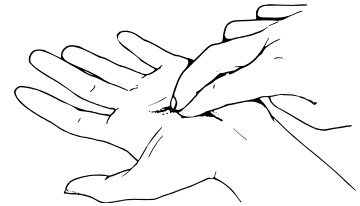


figure 1

Sunscreen

Healing skin does not have protective pigment. The skin is much more sensitive to sunlight.

Your child must:

- **Wear protective clothes.** Wear long-sleeve shirts, long pants, and hats to prevent sunburn and blisters. Newly healed burned skin is very sensitive and fragile. Do not expose burned or injured skin to any sunlight until all the red color has faded. Wounds may turn very dark brown or blotchy even with brief exposure to the sun. Unprotected skin can get a slight sunburn in only twelve minutes on a summer day.
- **Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more.** Always put sunscreen on any area of skin that has been burned, even if it is covered by clothing or compression garments. Sunburn can occur even through clothes and compression garments. You can also buy clothes with sun protection built in.
- **Wear a hat.** A hat with a wide brim is best. This will help protect the areas most prone to sun exposure: eyes, ears, nose, neck, and the top of your child's head.

Hypertrophic scars

After a burn has healed, skin goes through many changes. Sometimes, thick scar tissue will form. Hypertrophic scars are tight, firm, thick bulges that may itch. To keep these from forming, your child may be treated with Tubigrip® or a compression garment. If you see this type of scar forming, call the doctor.

Contractures

A contracture occurs when the skin and muscles around the joint have become shorter. This makes it hard to move the joint. Exercise helps prevent contractures. It is very important for your child to do their exercises as directed. This keeps the skin, muscles and joints flexible.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.