

Burns: Home Care

(For burns that are not on the face)

Your child has a burn injury that you can care for at home. Read and follow these important instructions. Doing so will help prevent infection and will help your child's wound heal properly.

You will need to change the bandages every day. Changing your child's bandages **every day** will help keep the wound clean, free of infection and help it heal.

What supplies will I need?

- Gauze: You will put medicine (burn cream) on this gauze and then put it on your child's burn. See your child's after visit summary for directions on how to do this.
- Burn wrapping: used to wrap over the gauze.
 - Rolled gauze
 - Ace[®] wrap
- Clean applicators to put medicine on dressings.
- Mild, unscented soap to help clean the wound. Use Johnson & Johnson, Ivory or Dial soap.
- Clean washcloth for cleaning the wound.
- Paper toweling or clean towel for the prepared dressings.
- Clean towel to dry your child after the bath.

What medicines will I use for my child's burns?

- Silvadene[®]: This cream is used on the burn wound to help prevent infection. **Do not use this cream on your child's face.**
- Antibiotic ointment
- Pain medicine: Give as ordered by the doctor.

Give your child this medicine for relief of pain for dressing changes and also in between dressing changes as needed.

- For dressing changes, give your child this medicine ½ to 1 hour before you do the dressing change.
- For Burn clinic appointments, give your child this medicine so that the medicine has a ½ hour to work before the follow-up appointment.

- Benadryl[®]: Give as ordered by the doctor. This medicine is to help itching.

How do I change the dressing?

First, get ready for the dressing change.

1. Gather all the supplies and medicines that are on the supply list.
2. Clean the bathtub with cleanser. Rinse the bathtub well so all the cleanser grit is gone.
3. Wash your hands with soap and water.

Dressing change (continued)

4. Prepare the burn dressings.
 - a. Lay out paper toweling on a counter to make a clean surface.
 - b. Use clean applicator to take medicine out of the container.
 - c. Spread the medicine on the burn gauze to cover the surface. It should be thick enough that you can no longer see through the gauze.
 - d. Lay the cream covered burn dressing on the paper toweling or a clean towel.
5. Fill the bathtub with warm water. Check to make sure the water is not too hot.

Second, clean your child's burn wounds.

1. Remove the old dressings. If the dressing is stuck, soak the area with water to help loosen it. If needed, you can do this while your child is in the bathtub
2. Check the burn wound for signs of infection:
 - Redness
 - Swelling
 - Drainage that smells bad
 - Green-colored drainage

NOTE: Old medicine will look slimy on the wound. This is normal; it is not a sign of infection.

3. Put your child in the bathtub. Wash the burn wound using a mild soap and clean washcloth. As you wash the wound, you may notice a thin jelly-like layer come off of the wound. This is old medicine and some wound drainage. This needs to come off for the wound to heal well. The wound should look pink – not bleeding.
4. After washing the wound, rinse it with clean, warm tap water.
5. Take your child out of the bathtub. Dry your child's skin by "patting" the skin with a clean towel. Do not rub the skin.

Third, put on new dressing: wrapping.

1. Cover your child's burn wounds with the gauze you that you put the medicine on. Put the gauze on so that the medicine touches the wounds.
2. Wrap the burn wound dressing with rolled gauze.
3. When you wrap the wound, you must make sure that the wrapping is not too tight. It is best to wrap on a diagonal (like the striping on a candy cane, as shown in the diagram).

**What should I do if the dressing gets dirty before the next dressing change?**

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the top wrap.
3. Take the dressing off in layers. Replace soiled dressing with clean dressing.

What else can I do to help my child heal?

- Some children need special exercises to help maintain or recover function. Please follow exercise instructions given by the physical or occupational therapist.
- Good nutrition will help your child's burns heal.
 - Have your child eat a healthy diet that may include whole milk. Choose foods that are high in protein and calories.
 - Limit the amount of "junk" food your child eats. Avoid candy, chips and soda even though these foods often have higher calorie content.
 - Look at the teaching sheet #1963 (**Nutrition for the Child with Burns**).

Does my child need to see the doctor or nurse again?

- Your child's burns need to be checked by the doctor or nurse in the Burn Clinic to see that they are healing well.
- Make an appointment to have the burn wounds checked by the doctor or nurse.
- For more information about burns, visit the Children's Hospital website at www.chw.org.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Has signs of infection. This includes redness, swelling, bad-smelling or green-colored drainage.
- Has a temperature over 101.2° F (38° C).
- Is not interested in eating or drinking or is eating or drinking very little.
- Is nauseated or vomiting.
- Has pain or itching that is not relieved by medicine.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

Or if you:

- Run out of medicine or dressing supplies for your child.
- Are not able to care for the burn at home.

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.