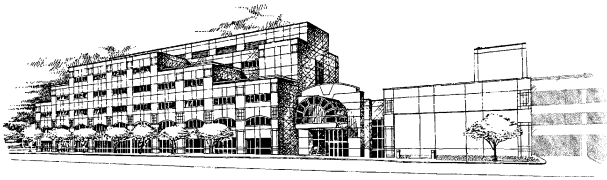


## Shriners Hospitals For Children Cincinnati Burns Hospital



### YOUR CHILD'S BURN INJURY: The First Year

*When your child sustains a burn injury, you will, no doubt, have many questions and concerns. The following information is provided to give you a better understanding of your child's injury and the care he/she needs.*

#### The Burn Injury

The doctor may determine that your child will need to be hospitalized for skin grafting (a surgery that takes healthy skin from another part of his/her body to cover the burn wound) or it may be a burn that can be treated on an outpatient basis until it heals or is then determined to need a skin graft. Your child's nurse will teach you how to take care of the grafts and/or burns.

#### Scarring and Discoloration

Whether a burn heals, or is grafted, scarring is a possibility. The amount of scarring is individual to each patient (some people tend to scar more than others). Scarring can range from a discoloration of the skin, to raised, firm, irregular areas of tissue. Scarring *usually* peaks (maximum redness, firmness and thickness) at 3 to 6 months after the burn and 12 to 18 months for it to mature (fade in color, soften and flatten). Again, this varies from patient to patient. During this time there are ways to minimize the scarring your child may have.

#### Scar Control

The doctor may prescribe special garments, braces, splints, massage and/or exercises to help decrease scarring and maintain normal function. It is very important to follow the prescribed program so your child can achieve the best possible result. These garments, braces and splints are custom made and fit to your child here at Shriners Hospital. They need to be worn as prescribed for maximum benefit. Your child may need to wear these items for 12 to 18 months, sometimes more or less, depending on how much he/she wears them and how he/she scars.



#### Rehabilitation Therapy

Stretching and exercising as prescribed by your therapist and doctor is very important. You will be taught how to exercise your child at home. If there is a need, Outpatient Therapy may also be prescribed and can be set up at a hospital/center near your home. Your child may resist therapy because it is uncomfortable. It is extremely important that the scars stay stretched in order to prevent contractures (scar bands that pull tight, preventing normal movement).

#### Blisters/Cysts

New skin is fragile, so blisters may occur. Blisters can be caused from pressure or rubbing against the skin. They may be filled with clear fluid, blood or pus. Some blistering is normal and is no cause for concern. Small cysts may also form on the graft or along the graft edges. These areas may drain pus and reoccur frequently. They are called inclusion cysts. If blisters break open, causing an open area or if the cysts open and drain, cleanse and dress them as you do other wounds.

#### Itching

New skin and scars tend to be dry and itchy because sweat and oil glands may be destroyed during the burn injury. It is important to keep the skin moisturized with hand cream several times a day. You may use any kind of cream you choose, avoiding those with alcohol and perfumes. These ingredients may cause dryness or sensitivity in your child's skin. Creams should be applied to *healed* skin, grafts and donor sites, massaging it in until it completely disappears. Creams work better than lotion, especially for massage. If your child still has itching, "anti-itch" medicine can be prescribed that may also help.



#### Sunlight

Burned skin may be sensitive to the sun and need protection for about a year. Sunburn can occur easily to newly healed skin. Exposure to the sun can also cause permanent color changes in the burned skin, grafts and donor sites. These areas can darken, not tan, and will not fade. It is very important to use a sunblock with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. You may also want to cover the burn areas with light clothing for added protection.



#### Heat and Cold

Newly burned, healed or grafted skin may be sensitive to extreme temperatures, both heat and cold. Redness may increase or other color changes may be noticed with exposure to these extreme temperatures. Your child may also notice increased sensitivity or lack of feeling to the areas. Examples of things to protect the skin against are open flames, hot bath water, hot water bottles, heating pads, electric blankets, hot vinyl car seats, ice and snow or ice bags.

## School



It is important to return to school as soon as possible. The longer you delay, the harder it is to return. The hospital staff can help provide information to the school to make your child's return much easier.

## Contact Sports

Contact sports will need to be avoided for several weeks after skin grafting or after a burn has healed. Skin needs time to regain "strength". Ask your doctor before allowing your child to participate in these activities.

## Swimming

It is best to wait until burns and grafts are completely healed before going swimming. Prescribed garments must be worn while swimming. Be sure to have a clean, dry set of pressure garments to change into after swimming. Do not allow garments to dry while your child is still wearing them. Use a sunblock (even under the garments) and re-apply often.

## Clinic Appointments



Your child will need to return to the Shriners Hospital Clinic for follow-up on his/her burn. Their visits may be every 1 to 2 weeks, depending on healing of the burn, graft(s) and/or donor sites. Once areas are healed and garments are fit (if needed), the visits may be every 2 to 6 weeks, again depending on progress. If garments are prescribed and if the scars and your child's range of motion (movement of joints) are progressing as expected, Clinic visits may decrease to once every 2 to 3 months. Please remember to bring *all* of your child's garments, braces, splints and/or any prescribed appliances to each clinic visit. If the burn healed quickly and left no scarring, your child may not need to be seen again.

*If you have any questions, please feel free to call your child's therapist, nurse or doctor or speak with them when you return to clinic. It may be helpful to make a list of any questions you may have and bring it to your next Clinic appointment.*



### **Telephone numbers that may be helpful:**

**Clinic:** (513) 872-6240  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Telefax: (513) 872-6143

**Garment Fabrication:**  
(513) 872-6233  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Occupational/Physical Therapy:**  
(513) 872-6216

**Orthotics (face masks, neck braces):**  
(513) 872-6311  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Main Hospital number:**  
(513) 872-6000

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Shriners Burns Hospital, Cincinnati Unit, is a non-profit hospital of the Shriners Hospitals for Children system.

Our mission is to minimize the devastation of burn injuries and enhance the patients' potential and quality of life. We provide without cost, family centered and holistic pediatric burn care of the highest quality. We stimulate and sponsor study and research in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, and provide leadership and education in the management of pediatric burns.

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