

700 Children's Drive  
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## DRESSING CHANGE: BURNS

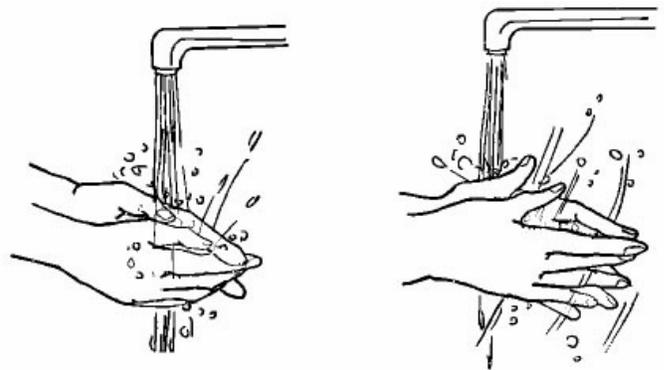
Your child has been treated for a burn and will need to have daily dressing (bandage) changes. Daily dressing changes are done to promote healing and prevent infection. There are several types of dressings for burns. The doctor will decide what type of dressing is best for your child. The nursing staff will teach you how to care for your child's burn.

<p><b>DOCTOR'S ORDER</b></p>	<p>Child's Name _____</p>
<p>Change your child's dressing and apply (name of medicine) _____ to unhealed burns ____ times a day.</p> <p>Other information:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Caution: Store all medicines out of children's reach.</b></p>	

### YOU WILL NEED

You will need the following items for changing a burn dressing. Your child's nurse will give you most of the items.

- Paper or plastic bag, or several sheets of newspaper
- Mild soap (without perfume or artificial coloring) such as Ivory, Safeguard, or Dial.
- Freshly laundered washcloth or gauze squares
- Medicine as ordered by the doctor
- Tongue depressors or clean table knife (if using ointment)
- Sterile gauze pads
- Sterile gauze roll
- Adhesive or paper tape



**Picture 1** Wash your hands well before changing the dressing.

## HOW TO CHANGE THE DRESSING

Explain to your child how the dressing change will be done, using simple words he can understand.

1. Wash your hands.
2. Set up all the needed supplies in a clean area.
3. Remove the old dressing and place it in a bag or wrap it in newspaper. Throw it away.
4. **Wash your hands again.**
5. Wash the burned area with mild soap and water. Use a clean washcloth or gauze squares. Gently wash the area to remove all drainage and crusting. Do not worry if some bleeding occurs. This is normal. (The child may take a bath or shower using cool to **lukewarm** water. If taking a bath, make sure the tub is clean and well rinsed.)
6. Rinse the burned area with clean, lukewarm water.
7. Pat the area dry with a clean towel or gauze squares.
8. Look closely at the burned areas to check the healing.
9. Open the dressing packages carefully and leave the dressings in the packages until you're ready to use them.

### If Using an Ointment-Type Dressing

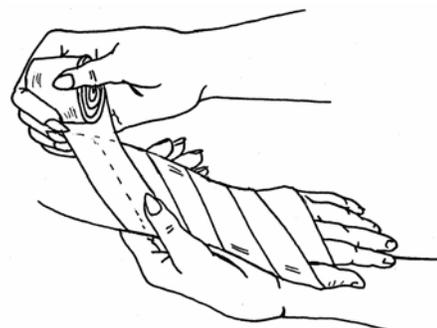
1. Use a tongue depressor or clean table knife to spread a thin layer of ointment on a sterile gauze pad (dressing). **Do not** put your fingers into the ointment jar. Touch only the edges of the dressing with your fingers. **Do not** spread the ointment directly on the burn.
2. Place the ointment dressing on the burned area (Picture 2). Use as many ointment dressings as you need to cover all of the burned area. Cover the dressing with dry gauze. Hold the dressings in place by wrapping a sterile gauze roll over the dressings (Picture 3). Secure the ends of the gauze roll with tape. (Do not wrap the tape too tightly because this can reduce circulation.)

## AFTER THE DRESSING CHANGE

1. Wash your hands again.
2. Put all equipment away in a clean, dry place.
3. Clean the bathtub or shower.



**Picture 2** Cover the burn area with a fresh dressing.



**Picture 3** Hold the dressing in place with a sterile gauze wrap.

## CARE AFTER THE BURN HAS HEALED

After the burn has healed and the dressings are no longer needed, the healed skin needs to be protected. Skin care includes keeping the area clean and preventing injury. These suggestions will help you during this period:

- There's usually some itching along with dry, scaly, healed skin. Your child should not scratch. This may break the skin and leave open places on areas that are already healed.
- Apply skin lotion over the healed burn at least 3 times a day and as often as needed to relieve dry skin or itching. You may use lotions that contain cocoa butter, aloe, or lanolin. You don't need to buy the most expensive brand.
- Keep your child's fingernails trimmed short to prevent skin damage from scratching. Clean socks placed over the hands like gloves may reduce nighttime scratching.
- Loose clothes should be worn. Tight clothing can rub the skin and cause blisters.
- Your child should wear only enough clothing to be comfortable. If your child gets too warm, healed areas may start to itch.
- Clothes worn next to the skin should be washed and rinsed well. Any detergent left in the clothes can irritate the skin.

## OUTSIDE PLAY

- Burned skin is more sensitive than normal skin. It sunburns easily. When possible, keep your child out of direct sunlight. If your child is in the sun, cover burned areas with light clothing. You may apply a sunscreen lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. **Sunscreens must be reapplied several times a day.** Don't expose burns to direct sunlight from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This is the peak sunburning period. Remember that sunburn can occur on cloudy days, too, so protect the burned area with clothing or sunscreen.
- A child with burns on the face should wear a hat with a brim to help protect the skin.
- Your child's skin will be more sensitive to the sun for **at least a year.** After this time, apply sunscreen and test the skin by exposing a small area to the sun. If the skin gets red in 30 minutes or less, you will know it's too soon to expose the burned area to the sun.
- Ask your doctor if your child is allowed to swim.

## WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Most burns heal in 2 to 3 weeks. It's important to check the burned area closely at each dressing change.

If the burn is not healing properly, you may notice one or more of the following signs.

- Changes in the drainage (color, amount, odor)
- A lot of bleeding when the dressing is changed.
- Swelling or redness around the burn
- Increased pain at the site
- Child has a fever above 101°F by mouth, 102°F by rectum, or 100°F axillary (underarm).

If you don't think your child's burn is healing right, please call your doctor

(name) \_\_\_\_\_ at

(phone) \_\_\_\_\_.

After 5:00 p.m. and on weekends, please call the Burn Unit at (614) 722-3860.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.



**Picture 4** Apply a sunscreen lotion with an SPF of at least 15 several times a day.

