

## **Burns and Plastics Therapy Team**

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**This leaflet can be made available in alternative  
languages/formats on request.**

### **Caring for Healed Burns and Skin Grafts**

**Patient information leaflet**

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Produced by Burns & Plastics Therapy Team

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## **It is very important to ensure that you monitor your skin condition carefully**

Healed skin can break down for a number of reasons. This leaflet aims to advise you how to avoid skin breakdown and what to do if it occurs.

### **General skin care**

- The damaged skin and the surrounding area should be washed **at least** once a day. A mild, un-perfumed soap should be used. A build up of cream and dirt on the skin can lead to blackheads or spots and potentially skin breakdown.
- Some people may experience a reaction to the cream such as a rash, itching or burning sensations after application. If this happens please contact your therapist at Whiston Hospital.

### **Massage and Moisturising**

- Massage and the application of cream is an important part of ongoing care of the skin. Healed skin can become very dry and itchy if the oil producing glands are damaged. However it is important that you only apply cream to the healed areas of skin, avoiding any broken areas.
- Massaging the scar can help to place pressure over the scar. It must be done in a firm circular movement. This will help to soften the scar and help absorption of moisturising creams.

### **How often do I need to apply the cream?**

The healed area should be massaged three times a day and after bathing / showering.

### **Pressure garments**

Scars can undergo many changes. The tissue can become raised, red and hard. As this happens movement may become more difficult and restricted. Pressure garments are designed to place a precise amount of pressure over the scar areas in order to flatten, soften and help to pale the skin.

- Your therapist will assess whether you need a pressure garment. If you do you will be given an appointment to be measured for the garment. You will have to return to be fitted with the garment. If this is needed advice and information will be provided by your therapist.
- Pressure garments need to be worn from 6 to 24 months. Advice will be given on how long you need to wear it.

**If there is any skin breakdown the garment must be removed and you must seek advice from your named therapist immediately**

### **Sunlight**

- Exposure to direct sunlight should be avoided, as the scar area will burn easily. If exposure to the sun is unavoidable total sun block should be applied regularly to the scar area.
- If you have a pressure garment total sun block should be worn underneath when in the sun. Areas such as the face should be shaded with a hat.
- Exposure to the sun should be avoided whilst the skin is healing and the scar is in the development stage, which will be two years following the injury.

## Exercise

- Exercise is important as it can prevent the skin from tightening and contracting. Contact sports should be avoided until the scar has healed as it will be sensitive and thin, therefore prone to damage.
- You can return to swimming when your scar has fully healed. It is important to wash all of the chlorine from your skin afterwards and to apply cream to prevent the skin becoming dry and itchy.

## Cosmetic Camouflage

A cosmetic camouflage clinic is available. Your therapist can refer you to the Cosmetologist who will provide you with advice. Your GP or Burns / Plastic Surgeon can also refer you to this service.

## Clinical Psychology

If you are having any problems or memories from your injury which are affecting your daily living, please tell your therapist, who can refer you to the burns Clinical Psychologist.

## Scar review clinic

- On your last visit to the Dressings Clinic a Therapist will assess your scar in order to advise you how to carry on treating it. An appointment will be made for you to attend the Scar Review Clinic. At this appointment your scar will be reassessed to make sure that it is maturing.
- If there are no further problems at this stage you will be discharged. If you have any further problems after discharge you can ask your GP to refer you to our service again.

## Further surgery

If it has been discussed with you that you may need further surgery an appointment may be arranged for you with the Burns Consultant. At this appointment your options will be discussed.

## Support

Links to support groups and charitable organisations can be accessed on the Northern Burn Care Network website:

<http://www.nbcn.nhs.uk/patients/useful-links.htm>

Alternatively please feel free to contact the Burns Unit for advice.

**If you would like to comment or know more about  
Therapy Services please contact  
0151 430 1237**