

## **Burns & Plastics Therapy Service**

**Burn Unit 0151 426 1600  
Extension 2243**

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

**Occupational Therapy &  
Physiotherapy Service**

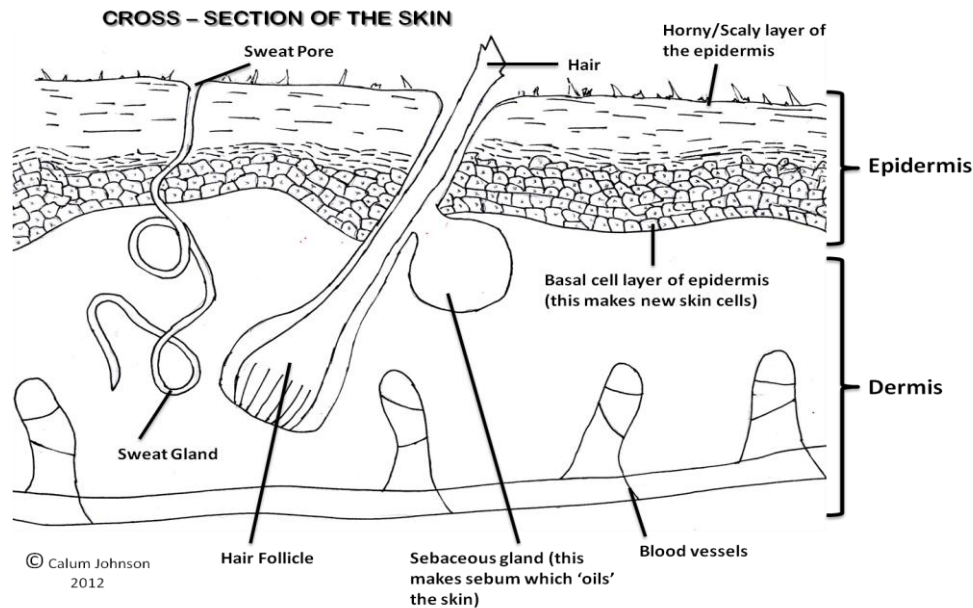
**Caring for your skin  
following a burn injury**

**Patient information leaflet**

**Therapist:**

## Introduction

You have sustained a superficial burn injury. A superficial burn is a burn which damages the uppermost layer of the skin only. (The **EPIDERMIS**)



The epidermis has a layer of special cells which can replace the skin cells damaged by the burn, enabling the injury to heal, without causing permanent scarring. However, this healing process may take **3 to 4 weeks**, and it may be a **further 6 - 12 months** before the skin returns completely to normal.

## Care of your healed skin

The newly healed skin is delicate, and requires care and attention to protect it and ensure that the best cosmetic result is achieved.

Newly healed skin may be very dry. This is because glands which produce the skin's natural oils have been temporarily

damaged by the burn. It may take **as long as 2 years** for these glands to recover fully.

Prior to cream massage, ensure the skin is clean and dry. Wash the skin with unscented, mild soap and pat dry with a towel. Apply a small amount of cream with the fingertips and massage in to the area using firm circular pressure, until all the cream has been absorbed. **Avoid friction on the skin.**

Regular massage in this way helps keep the skin soft and supple, and can help prevent scar tissue formation. It is important not to apply too much cream as this can lead to blocked pores, which may cause the skin to blister and break down.

## Care in the sun

The newly healed skin is delicate and very susceptible to sun burn, even on overcast, cloudy days. It is strongly recommended that you apply **factor 50** sun creams to the area **for 2 years** following a burn injury. This will prevent sun-burn and permanent skin discolouration.

## Things to look out for

Initially, the newly healed skin may appear quite red. The colour may change depending on whether you are warm or cold; appearing very red when warm and bluish or purple when cold. **This is a normal part of the healing process and should settle within 6 months or so.**

Over a period of time (**up to 1 year after injury**), the skin should return to normal.

Signs which may indicate that it is not settling as expected include:

- Red, raised, thickened or lumpy scarring
- Tight bands of scarring causing reduced movement
- Frequent breakdown of the skin
- Very sensitive, painful or itchy scarring

If you develop any of the problems above, or you have any concerns about the way your skin has healed, please contact your named therapist on the telephone number shown on the front of this leaflet.

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