



## A guide to...

# Minor Burns

## *Patient Information*

Children's Emergency Department (CED)

Watford General Hospital



Following assessment and treatment of your child, we are happy for you to be discharged home with arranged follow up and advice overleaf.

**ALL** children who have sustained a burn, must be reviewed by a healthcare professional 48 hours after the initial injury. This is because the injured area can change significantly during this time, and review is vital to ensure appropriate management and the best outcome for your child. This review may happen in CED or you may be referred to our colleagues in the burns clinic — your clinician will advise you of this pre discharge. After this review, you will be advised on further care and dressings, usually with an expectation that you will be seen every three to five days with your GP practice nurse until the area has healed.

We expect minor burns to heal within seven to 14 days when cared for properly, however this can vary depending on personal factors eg, type of burn, individual age and health.

### **First Aid for Burns**

- Remove loose clothing / nappy / jewellery if contaminated or near burn site
- Cool area under cool (not cold) running water for at least 20 minutes without removing. Apply wet towel or cover with clingfilm during transfer to hospital — ensure rest of child is kept warm.
- Give pain relief if age appropriate, and keep calm.

**Dressings** — keep dressings clean and dry.

If discharge is visible on the outer dressing or if it becomes wet or very dirty, then please attend the GP practice nurse or CED for a dressing change.

**DO NOT** allow your child to engage in water or sand play if at nursery or school.

Give your child paracetamol and / or ibuprofen for pain — follow instructions on the packet.

Please ensure that you give a dose one hour before any planned dressing changes.

**Observe and return to CED urgently if your child develops any of the following:**

- Increased pain
- Swelling
- Redness
- Excessive discharge
- Offensive smell
- Fever
- Diarrhoea and / or vomiting
- Widespread red rash
- Red eyes, lips or tongue
- Lethargy or drowsiness
- Headache.

**Aftercare**

**Itching** — It is very common for a newly healed burn to itch. Avoid scratching. To relieve symptoms you can place a cool flannel over the area, massage with moisturising cream, give anti-histamine.

**Washing** — once fully healed (site pink and dry), you can bath / shower as usual. Pat the burn site dry, no not rub.

**Moisturising** — important to aid scar reduction so use an unperfumed moisturiser at least twice daily; massage into area using a firm pressure and in a circular motion.

**Sun care** — void direct sunlight so scar tissue. Keep burn site covered and apply at least SPF 50 products; reapply regularly.

**Activities** — your child can return to normal activities when the site is healed. Chlorinated pools dry skin so apply additional moisturiser.

**Scarring** — This is a common concern, however is difficult to predict. If the burn site has healed on its own within two weeks with only basic care, then it is unlikely to cause a scar.

Normal healing skin will initially appear red, purple or pink due to increased blood supply and lack of pigmentation of the area — this can take up a one year to fade.

**Please be cautious to avoid further, common but avoidable, injuries:**

- Always apply suncream APF 50+ when out in the sun
- Keep hot items such as drinks, hair straighteners, iron, kettle, hot saucepan handles etc out of reach of children.
- Do not leave children unsupervised in the kitchen or near a BBQ or fire.
- Check bath/shower temperature before placing a child in — do not leave them unattended when a bath is being run
- Do not microwave baby's milk / drinks as uneven heating can cause oral burns
- Keep chemicals / household cleaners / batteries in locked cupboards and always out of reach of children
- Check smoke alarms regularly
- Use plug socket covers at electrical points not in use, and ensure charging leads etc are kept out of reach.

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.uk**



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