

# Caring for your child and their burn injury

## Emergency Department Patient Information Leaflet

**The information in this leaflet will help you to look after your child's burn injury at home**

### **How can I help relieve my child's pain?**

Burns can be very painful. It is important to give your child regular painkilling medication but please check the dosage on the bottle carefully.

Pain control and comfort during your child's treatment is important. If your child needs dressing changes at the hospital, we advise that you give your child some painkilling medication 30 to 45 minutes before their appointment time. This can help reduce any discomfort during their dressing change.

You can help make dressing changes easier by taking favourite toys or activities to help distract them.

## Dressings

Your child will have a dressing covering their burn in order to protect the area. This is needed until the burn is fully healed. The dressing will need to be changed regularly. We will tell you how often the dressing needs to be changed and who you will see and where you have to go to do this.

Please try to keep your child's dressings clean and dry and leave the bandages in place until your next appointment.

You will need to contact the Emergency Department or your GP if any of the following problems arise:

- The dressing becomes too tight.
- The dressing becomes dirty or wet.
- The dressing becomes loose or falls off.
- The wound fluid leaks through the dressing.
- The dressing becomes smelly or looks green.
- Your child is in pain that is not relieved by painkillers.

If your child has burnt their hand/arm or foot/leg, it may help to keep the area raised when resting to reduce or prevent swelling. For example, they could rest their foot on a chair.

Exercise will also help to reduce swelling and stop the burned area getting stiff so please do any exercises with your child as instructed.

## Emotions and behaviour

Even small burn injuries can be very distressing for children and their parents or carers.

You can help by taking your child's concerns seriously, whilst calmly encouraging a return to normal life. If problems persist and disrupt normal life, please discuss this with the health professional caring for your child or your health visitor, school nurse or GP. If needed, they can seek further advice from staff in the local Burns Service.

## What about food and drink?

Encourage your child to drink normally and eat a healthy diet.

## What if my child becomes unwell?

**Rarely** a child may become unwell with a burn injury of any size. Toxic shock syndrome is a serious but uncommon infection that can develop very quickly.

It is therefore important that you observe your child and phone your GP or NHS **111** if they experience any of the symptoms:

- High temperature.
- Rash.
- Diarrhoea and vomiting (being sick).
- Goes off their food and drink.
- Becomes very sleepy.
- Not passing urine.

However, if your child is extremely unwell or you are very worried about their condition, seek help immediately – take your child to the nearest Emergency Department or call 999.

## Support groups

### Children's Burn Trust

020 7881 0902

[www.cbtrust.org.uk](http://www.cbtrust.org.uk)

### Enzo's Friends

A support group based in Burns Centre at Birmingham Children's Hospital:

[Enzo's Friends](#)

## Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblink:

### **NHS Choices**

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Burns-and-scalds/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to one of our nurses. If you need help when you return home, please contact your GP.

### **This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/accident-emergency/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)