

Your child has had a burn injury which has taken more than two weeks to completely heal.

*Burn injuries that take more than 2 weeks to heal are at risk of developing a thickened scar.*

The longer your child's burn took to heal the more likely it is for a scar to form. Skin grafts are also likely to form thickened scars especially at the edges.

## Importance of follow-up

Thickened scar tissue can become hard and cause discomfort. It usually does not grow at the same rate as normal skin and this can sometimes limit movement of a joint.

In most cases thickened scar tissue will begin to form within the first 12 weeks following the burn injury.

Scar treatments can be applied at any time but is best treated early when the scar thickening can be felt but has not become hard and raised. In cases where the healing took longer than 4 weeks or the burn was grafted, the burns team will commence scar treatments as soon as healing allows. For these reasons, it is important for the burns team to review your child's progress regularly during the first 12 weeks after their burn injury

## What can I do?

Newly healed skin is fragile and the colour of the healed burn is often red or pink. This may take many months to fade to a more normal skin colour.

There are things that you can do to help keep the newly healed skin protected, soft and supple and to check for scar thickening. These include:

## Sun Protection

Newly healed skin is more likely to become sunburnt and this can permanently affect the colour of the skin. Your child's burn should be protected from the sun with protective clothing and SPF 30+ sunblock applied daily for at least the first 12 months.

## Moisturising and Massage

Regular moisturising and massage of the newly healed burn will help moisturise the burn area and keeps the skin soft and supple. Massage with a fragrance free, water based moisturiser for 2 -3 minutes using firm circular movements. This may need to be done between 2 – 5 times per day.

Relieve Itchiness

Newly healed skin is often itchy. Scratching may irritate or damage the skin.

Encourage your child not to scratch the skin

Ways to help reduce itchiness:

- Moisturising and massage
- Apply a cool damp flannel
- Patting the area
- Applying pressure eg Tubigrip

Medication such as anti-histamines are sometimes prescribed by your doctor to reduce itchiness. Some are also available over the counter by speaking to your pharmacist.

## Scar Formation

Scars can sometimes develop and become thick and raised. Although this is unlikely if your child's burn healed in less than two weeks, it is still important for you to know what to look for.

## Scarring: What to look for

- Feel for any change in the texture or height of the newly healed skin. The skin may feel thicker, (like the skin on your palm), firmer or raised compared to normal

- This is especially important in the first 3 months following your child's burn injury. This is the time that any scar thickening may become evident.

If your child develops any scarring that is of concern to you, please contact the Allied Health Department.

A burns therapist will be able to advise you and provide the most appropriate treatment for your child.

## Scar Treatments

Treatment can help to soften and flatten scar tissue and is best started when scar thickening is just beginning.

Treatment may include moisturising and massage, use of silicon products and/or wearing of pressure garments, splints and doing stretches and strengthening exercises.

## Scar Treatments cont.

Scar treatments may need to be continued for a few months up to one to two years depending on the extent of your child's injury and response to treatment.

### Who do I contact if I am concerned?

#### **Physiotherapist/Occupational Therapist**

#### **Allied Health Department**

Telephone: 8161 7381 (9.00 - 4.00pm)

#### **Newland Ward:**

Telephone: 8161 7251 (all hours)

#### **Disclaimer**

The Women's and Children's Hospital Allied Health Department cannot take any responsibility for misuse of these products.

### For more information

#### **Allied Health**

#### **Women's and Children's Health**

#### **Network**

#### **WCH**

Ground Floor

Good Friday Building

#### **ZONE A**

72 King William Road

NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006

Tel 08 8161 7381

Fax 08 8161 7040

[www.wch.sa.gov.au](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au)

Monday – Friday 8.30am – 4.00pm

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Women's & Children's Hospital

# Scar Management

## Caring for Your Healed Burn

(MORE THAN TWO WEEKS)

Information for  
parents & carers

