

Service: **Adult Burns**

How to manage your facial burn injury at home



Advice for patients and carers



Following your facial burn injury the aim is to promote healing and comfort, minimize the risk of infection, restore facial function and to minimize the risk of scarring.

If you have any concerns or difficulties with your facial care at home then please contact the Burns 24 hour help line tel: 0117 414 3100 or 0117 414 3102. Our staff will advise you further over the telephone. Additional contact details can be located on the back of this leaflet.

Facial care treatment

Cleansing and moisturising

1. It is essential that you always wash and dry your hands prior to starting to care for your facial burn.
2. Cleanse all affected facial exposed areas with warm tap water or shower (please ensure water temperature is not too hot by testing it on uninjured skin).
3. Apply a mild, non-perfumed soap and gently pat off any dead skin, debris and residual cream like soft paraffin using single use gauze to all unhealed areas.
4. Do not attempt to remove any facial scabs before they have lifted away from the skin as this will help minimize facial scarring and promote healing of the skin cells beneath. Often, these areas are best washed by holding a clean flannel over them and irrigating with the shower head. The scabs will fall off when the skin has healed.
5. Men should shave daily if possible as hair follicles can harbor bacteria and there may be a greater risk of infection.

6. Apply a thin layer of soft paraffin ointment to all unhealed facial areas as this will keep your skin moist. Keeping the skin moist will encourage healing.
7. It is important that you follow the above facial treatment several times a day to minimize the risk of infection and to maintain a moist wound environment to aid healing.
8. Please note soft paraffin ointment is a flammable product; please ensure you do not expose your face to any naked flames and it should never be applied in the presence of inflammable gases such as home oxygen that may be used for chronic chest conditions. If you are receiving home oxygen therapy you should not use paraffin based moisturising products the burns team will be advised to you accordingly.
9. Apply a non-perfumed moisturizer cream/emollient such as E45 or Nivea twice daily to all healed areas.

If your facial burn is superficial then your face will be red in appearance for some weeks. If your burn is deeper healing may take longer than two weeks and our team should be made aware.

Facial swelling (oedema)

After sustaining a facial burn the body will often respond with increased facial swelling to lips, cheeks and eyes. Swelling may occur within hours of injury. It tends to be at its worst at 48 hours but tends to settle down by the fifth day. To reduce any swelling, it is important that you position yourself in a more upright position than normal, supported by pillows when sitting or sleeping, to aid the resolution of facial swelling.

Eye care

Facial swelling may affect your eyes and cause irritation or dryness. If you are at risk of this, it is important to keep your eyes clean and moist with regular irrigation. Eye drops may be necessary and these are typically applied up to four times a day. Please alert your team if your eyes are gritting, drying or there is any new problem with your vision via the 24 hour helpline.

Ear care

If you have burn to your ear regions it is important to keep these areas clean and moisturized regularly with soft paraffin ointment. If you experience any increased pain or redness to the ear area, please contact the 24 hour burns helpline.

Pain relief

Frequently, facial burns give some discomfort but are not painful. You may have been prescribed pain relief by your doctor. Ensure you take these regularly. If you have new pain after discharge, this can be an early sign of infection and it is worth discussing with your team.

Care in the sun

Following a facial burn it is very important to protect the burned skin from the sun. Total block sun cream (UVB Sun Protection Factor 50 with five star UVA Sun Protection) needs to be applied as the burned skin is more susceptible to further damage including sunburn and altered pigment. Use of a wide brimmed hat is also recommended during times of intense sun exposure. You will need to take these precautions for at least two years.

Symptoms of infection

Infection is rare after a facial burn. If you have any new pain, swelling, visual problems or increased discharge please inform us. This is particularly relevant if you feel unwell at the same time, for example, sweats, shivers, vomiting, diarrhoea or a rash.

Additional information and support

You may find that you are concerned about the way you look after your burn injury. There may be painful memories associated with the events of the injury. You can discuss any concerns with the staff on the burn ward or Acute Burns Clinic (ABC). However, if these issues persist, the staff on the unit can arrange you to see our clinical psychologist for further support.

Facial exercises will be given to you by the physiotherapist on the burn unit or ABC. Your face may feel tight for several months. This may make it difficult to eat and drink. Carrying out regular facial exercises will help to make eating and drinking easier and to open and close your eyes. Our team will give you expert advice.

Sometimes facial burn can cause scarring. If you have taken longer than two weeks to heal or have needed a skin graft you will be referred to the scar management team. Please ask to see the team if you have any concerns. Scar management advice can be obtained from the Scar Management Team when we see you on the burns unit, ABC or your burns follow up clinic held in Gate 24, Level 1.

Useful websites

Adult Burns Unit:

www.nbt.nhs.uk/adultburns (accessed 10/09/2019)

Adult Burn Support UK

www.adultburnsupportuk.org (accessed 10/09/2019)

Changing Faces

www.changingfaces.com (accessed 10/09/2019)

Katie Piper Foundation

www.katiepiperfoundation.co.org (accessed 10/09/2019)

Outlook: Psychological support for people with appearance concerns

www.nbt.nhs.uk/outlook (accessed 10/09/2019)

Skin Camouflage

www.skin-camouflage.net (accessed 10/09/2019)

www.nbt.nhs.uk/lasercentre (accessed 10/09/2019)

Acid survivors Trust International

www.acidviolence.org (accessed 10/09/2019)

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How to contact us:

 **Adult Burns Unit**
Gate 33A
Level 2
Brunel building
Southmead Hospital
Bristol
BS10 5NB

 **Adult Burns 24-hour helpline**
0117 414 3100/3102

 **Acute Burns Clinic (Mon-Sat)**
0117 414 4005

 **Main Switchboard**
01179 505050

 **www.nbt.nhs.uk**

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

© North Bristol NHS Trust. This edition published September 2019. Review due September 2021. NBT002910

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