Burn Care Guidelines 2nd & 3rd Degree Burns

Remember, never use ice on a burn. It decreases blood flow and prevents healing.

**Second Degree Burns** appear open, shiny and moist, blistered, and pink or red. These burns are painful and sensitive to touch. These burns may be treated at home, in the clinic, or in the hospital. Second degree burns often take 1-3 weeks to heal.

**Third Degree Burns** appear dry or leathery, white, brown, maroon, dark red, or black. These burns are not sensitive to pain. Third degree burns often take greater than 3 weeks to heal or need skin grafting. These burns are treated at home only if they are quite small.

Follow the burn care treatments below marked with an X.

_____ Remove the dressing. Do not soak to remove it. Dry dressing removal cleans away dead tissue and debris.

_____ Wash burns gently once a day with unscented, antimicrobial soap. Do not use baby soap or soaps with lotion in it. Wash off antibiotic cream, blisters, and loose skin. Rinse well. A small amount of bleeding may be expected. Facial burns should be washed twice daily.

_____ Remove antimicrobial cream/ointment from jar with gloves or washed hands to prevent contamination of the jar.

_____ Apply a thin layer of Bacitracin or Silvadene antimicrobial cream or ointment to the burn two times per day (about 10-12 hours apart).

_____ For facial burns – apply antibiotic ointment twice a day, and more often if face becomes dry. No gauze is needed on the face. Shave facial hair once a day.

_____ For ear burns – apply bacitracin antimicrobial cream twice a day. Do not get cream in the ear canal. It may build up and plug the ears.

_____ For facial burns – apply antibiotic ointment twice a day, and more often if face becomes dry. No gauze is needed on the face. Shave facial hair once a day.

_____ Apply a non-stick gauze called Cuticerin.

_____ Wrap all burns except the face and ears with non-stretch roller gauze. Extra layers of gauze may be needed if the wound is weepy.

**Stop Smoking.** Smoking decreases blood flow and oxygen to new and healed burns. It slows down the healing process.

**How to Prevent Swelling**
Compression and elevation are very important to preventing swelling away from your wound and promoting healing. This can also help relieve pain.

_____ Apply Dermafit or compression stockings.
Face or head burns—elevate head while sleeping.

Hand or arm burns—rest hand or arm on pillows above the level of the heart as much as you can.

Foot and leg burns—keep feet and legs up on pillows when sitting or in bed. Keep heels off edge of pillow.

Watch for Signs and Symptoms of Infection:
- Redness (about 1 inch in width) and swelling around the burn.
- Foul smelling drainage from the wound.
- Flu-like symptoms (temperature greater than 100.4º or 101.5 F for children by mouth for two readings taken 4 hours apart, chills, nausea, vomiting, or muscle aches).
- Increasing burn pain. Not relieved by prescribed pain medicine.
- Pain

Take prescribed pain pills 45 minutes-1 hour before dressing changes.

Between dressing changes use TYLENOL® (acetaminophen or extra strength acetaminophen) to treat pain. You will have less pain as the burn heals. The burn feels stiff or like it is being pulled as it heals.

Use ibuprofen only if approved by burn doctor.

Exercises
- Exercise to keep joints moving and to stretch new skin.

Keep moving and walk often

Use your burned extremity

Diet
- Drink plenty of fluids with extra protein, 8-10 (8 oz.) glasses in 24 hours, to prevent dehydration.

Eat a well balanced diet high in protein to help the wound(s) heal.

Healed Skin
- Use moisture creams to prevent drying and cracking. Healed skin appears shiny pink.

Apply moisture creams that are perfume and dye-free such as Lubriderm, Eucerin®, or Nivea® as often as needed to keep the skin moist and soft. Avoid creams with alcohol or numbing agents.

Phone Numbers
For questions Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 5 pm please call the General Surgery and Burn Clinic at 608-263-7502.

If you have urgent questions or needs after hours or on weekends, please call the Burn Unit Nurses at 608-263-1490 or call 608-262-2122 and ask to have the Burn resident paged.

If you have non urgent questions or needs after hours or on weekends, please leave a message for the General Surgery triage nurse at 608-890-9542.
If you live out of the area, call 1-800-323-8942.