

The BUGS Booklet ... I'm leaving hospital, what now?

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Introduction



While you were on Odstock Ward you will have been longing to get home, but once there you may miss the support of the staff who were able to answer questions. This booklet aims to provide an overview of what to expect when recovering from your burn injury after being discharged from hospital.

It originated from one produced by the McIndoe Burns Support Group based at The Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead. BUGS would like to thank them for allowing us to use their booklet as the basis for this one.

You will have met many of the multi-disciplinary team who have assisted in developing this booklet. The team includes the Consultant Plastic Surgeons, Specialist Nursing and Therapy teams, Clinical Psychology and Dietetics. The booklets have also been reviewed by patient representatives.

For many patients, burn care does not stop when you leave hospital. The length of your recovery depends on the extent of your injuries, the need for surgery and how your body naturally heals.

This booklet aims to provide practical information regarding caring for your burn injury (i.e. how to wash and care for the affected skin) as well as some information about the social and emotional impact of burn injuries.

Though you have been discharged from the Burns Unit, please do not hesitate to contact the nurse-in-charge if you have any questions concerning your care once you are at home.

Odstock Ward Telephone Number

01722 345507

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Who are BUGS – Burns Unit Group Support?



BUGS was founded in May 2000 by staff trained in burn care and an ex- patient. It is the support group for patients with a burn injury who have been treated at Salisbury District Hospital. We support patients and their families, while they are on Odstock and Sarum wards and as they move out in to the community as outpatients.

We are run by lay and staff volunteers and are a fund of the Stars Appeal (fund No.1223), who assist us with all the back-office activities required to run a charitable fund. This means all funds donated to BUGS can be solely used to support patients. All that we have achieved since 2000, has only been possible through donations made directly to the BUGS fund.

Mission Statement

To support and encourage people as they move out into the community who are under the care of the Odstock Centre for Burns, Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery, by providing the opportunity for friendship, information, as well as practical and professional help and advice.

Objectives

- To support and encourage patients and their families/carers.
- To gather and impart relevant information to survivors and their families/carers.
- To provide public education through the media and programmes to help reintegration into society.
- To fund raise to support the work of BUGS
- To provide grants to help a patient return to their community or access specialist support.
- To support relevant research that will benefit BUGS members

We provide:

- Essential toiletries for inpatients
- Patient information
- Emotional Wellbeing in association with the Engage Project
- Funding for children aged 8 to 17 years and young adults aged 18 to 23 years to attend Burns Camps
- Aromatherapy on Odstock Ward
- Discretionary grants to individuals and for research
- Patient advocacy

Our website and social media pages aim to provide links to helpful organisations and information of relevance to burn survivors and their families.

Website: bugssalisbury.co.uk

Find us on Social Media or Scan the QR codes



[bugs.salisbury](https://www.facebook.com/bugs.salisbury)



[bugs_salisbury](https://www.instagram.com/bugs_salisbury)



[bugs_salisbury](https://www.tiktok.com/@bugs_salisbury)



I Still Have Dressings



If you have been discharged from hospital and are still having dressings, you should keep the dressing in place until the next appointment.

unless: -

- fluid oozes through the dressing
- the dressing becomes accidentally wet
- you experience worsening pain or discomfort

**If any of these happen you should contact
Odstock Ward to seek advice.**



I'm Worried I Might be Unwell

A wound infection needs prompt treatment. It is important to be aware of the signs of infection which are:

- high temperature
- skin rash
- vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- redness and/or any swelling
- increased pain
- discharge from the wound.

If you notice any of these signs, please contact **Odstock Ward on 01722 345507**. If you are very unwell, consider getting to medical help urgently.

What Do I Do If I Have Pain?



You may be given painkillers when you left hospital. You should take these as they have been prescribed. However, you should contact Odstock Ward or your GP for advice if you feel that the pain has become a problem and is not being managed adequately.

Doing an activity that focuses your concentration can help distract you from thinking about your pain.



Inhalation Injuries

If you had an inhalation injury following your accident (injury to the throat, lungs or breathing airways) you may have some periods of shortness of breath or wheezing even after a small amount of activity.

You may also have some hoarseness in your voice or have colds and coughs more often than usual. This is very normal. You may need to see your G.P. if you do not recover from colds or coughs as quickly as you used to.

Daily Skincare



It is important to moisturise the skin after washing. The oil and sweat glands are often damaged in a burn injury, making the scar area drier than normal skin.

New skin will benefit from the application of a moisturising cream a minimum of 2 – 3 times a day. Where the new skin is fragile or particularly red, the cream can be lightly massaged into the skin. As the skin starts to feel more robust but the scarring is becoming hard or thickened, the pressure of the massage may be increased. This will help to improve its quality and flexibility, which will make the area supple, less dry and also help to reduce itchiness. You will need to use as much cream as required to moisturise the skin. Be sure to massage the cream into the skin well.

- Wash your skin carefully before a session of applying the moisturising cream. This will help to prevent the cream from building up, which can lead to blackheads or pimples.
- If blackheads or white spots appear do not squeeze them, but use a sponge and gently wash the area with soap in a gentle circular motion.
- Use a simple, non-perfumed, aqueous (water-based) moisturiser that suits your skin. The cream that you use should be light and non-greasy. If the scarring remains dry with regular application, we recommend the additional use of an emollient type cream with a thicker consistency, similar to Vaseline. You may want to alternate between the two.
- Patch test any creams on a small area of the scar before applying it to the whole area in case of irritation or a reaction to the cream. Let it dry. Do not wash it off. Wait at least 24 hours to see if your skin reacts. Delayed reactions can take 4 days to show.

During your visit to our hospital, the nurses may have applied **My Trusty™ Sunflower Cream**, on your skin. It is the type of cream that is recommended to use on newly healing or scar tissue, once the skin is no longer fragile and less red. More information is provided at the end of this booklet.

Should I Shower or Bathe?



If you were discharged with dressings, check with the staff whether you can bathe. If the dressings are stuck to the skin you may find it helpful to soak them first. This can be done by getting in the bath or shower for a few minutes before trying to remove the dressings. Pressure garments used for scar management should be removed before bathing.

If your wounds are healed it is important that you bathe or shower every day. This helps to prevent a build-up of the moisturising cream that you will be using on your skin.

As part of normal good hygiene, the bath must be cleaned and rinsed before it is used. This should be done with a clear liquid or foam cleaner. A more abrasive cleaner may leave bits in the bath that may irritate the skin.

You will find that the skin is more sensitive to hot and cold temperatures. For this reason, it is important that you test the water temperature in the bath or shower before you bathe. It is best to test the water with an area of healthy skin first. The temperature should be at a pleasant warmth. Water thermometers, which indicate the safe temperature of the water, are available from chemists.

Washing



It is important to use a mild or pure non-perfumed soap, such as 'baby' soap or bubble bath, when washing and use your hand gently. This will help to reduce the chance of the skin becoming irritated. Using aqueous cream to wash with can help if your skin is very dry and itchy.

The skin needs to be cleaned as you have been advised. This will reduce the risk of infection. Make sure that the skin is dried gently with a clean towel. You will find that your skin will feel more supple after being warmed and after being in water.



Washing Your Hair

If your head has been burned, you can use just water or a very gentle, ideally non-perfumed shampoo or body wash. This will reduce the likelihood of irritating unhealed or newly healed areas of skin.

Wash your head with gentle pressure from your fingertips rather than with your nails. Make sure that you rinse the hair thoroughly to remove all of the shampoo.

What Kind of Clothes Will Be Best?



You will probably feel more comfortable if you wear loose clothing made of natural fibres such as cotton, linen or silk, rather than man-made fibres like polyester. Using tops with buttons can help if there is discomfort when dressing.

You may be more sensitive to extremes of temperature and should dress so that you are comfortable. A number of thin layers allow clothes to be removed or added as required. We do suggest that jeans should be avoided in the early months if you have leg burns, as the material can be harsh on newly healed skin.



What Shoes Should I Wear?

If your feet have been burned it is important that their shoes are comfortable and do not rub the newly healed skin.

A larger size than usual may be necessary and you will need to make sure that the style of shoe does not cause problems to your skin. Two pairs of cotton socks will help to reduce rubbing and help with foot hygiene.

Slippers are often a good choice of footwear in the beginning. A reputable shoe shop will be happy to advise on appropriate shoe fitting and size.

Eating and Drinking



There is nothing you cannot eat because of the burn. It is important that you eat a well-balanced diet including a variety of different foods at each meal to give you all the energy and nutrients required to help the wound to heal.

You may find that you need eat or to drink healthy snacks more often than you used to before the injury. You may find you feel more agitated when you need to eat or drink.

You can use the Eatwell Plate over the page to help you plan meals. Try to eat something from each of the food groups at every meal.

It is important to remember to drink plenty of fluids, such as water. Having been in hospital, where drinking is encouraged, it is easy to forget to drink once home.

Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.
Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

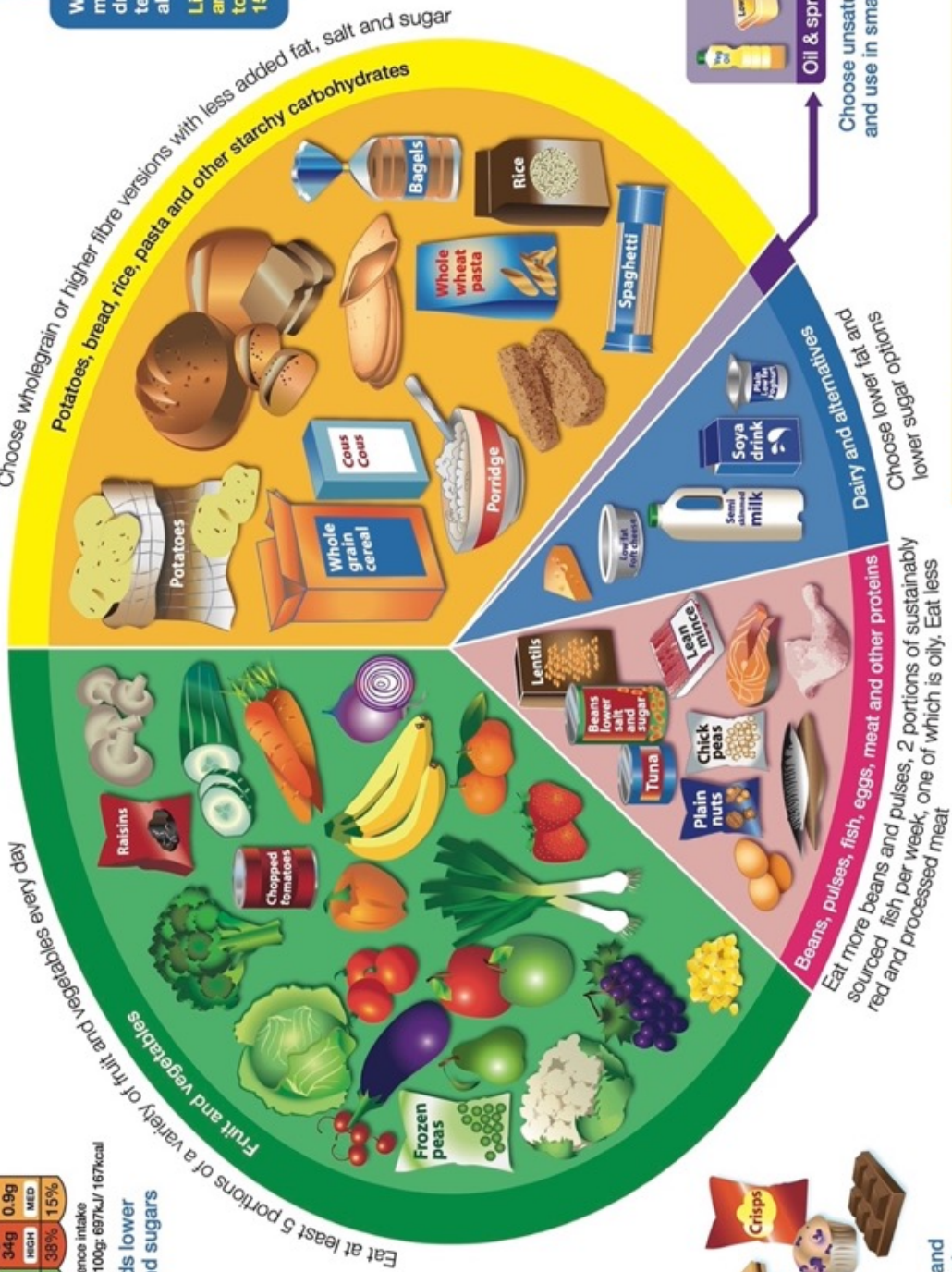
Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy (100kcal/200kcal)	Fat (3.0g)	Saturated fat (1.3g)	Sugars (34g)	Salt (0.9g)
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%
	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars



Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland © Crown copyright 2016

Being Discharged from Hospital



Being discharged from hospital can bring mixed emotions. You may feel one or more of these feelings:

- Excited – to be going home to a familiar environment
Worried or anxious – about caring for your burn injury yourself, about learning to live with your injury, about discussing it with other people, or other things
- Angry – about how you acquired your burn injury
Low – because things may change, because you have been through something difficult

These feelings can persist when you arrive home and return to your 'normal' life. Getting back to the life you had before your injury can take some time and requires patience and understanding from both you and those around you.

It can help to practice noticing your emotions to learn how to manage them.

How are you feeling about being discharged?

When Can I Begin Normal Daily Activities?



It is normal for you to feel more tired than usual when you first go home from hospital. You may need to pace your activity level according to how you feel. If you break an activity into smaller chunks rather than one big chunk, you are more likely to complete the activity. The aim is to avoid tiredness, frustration or feeling demotivated.

Do not be discouraged if you cannot manage all your normal daily activities immediately. Many things will take longer than before the injury as there are more personal needs. At times this will be frustrating, but it is important to remember that the end result is worthwhile. Try and do what you can and ask for help when you need it.

Doing things outside the home can help break up the day and meet other people. So, when you feel ready, start to return to activities you enjoyed before your injury. Take small steps and your confidence will grow as you become more independent again.

The Emotional Impact of Burns



Many people react in different ways depending on one's experiences, personality and the circumstances of their injury. Some people may not experience any emotional distress whereas others may be more affected.

Following a burn injury, you may notice changes in your behaviour. This change may be immediate or delayed. Sometimes people cope very well initially and then start to struggle weeks, months or years later, often during times of stress.

Depending on how you acquired your burn injury, you may become distressed when thinking and being reminded about the incident. Distress is very common after people experience overwhelming events and is usually temporary. If you feel overwhelmed by these feelings or if they continue for more than a month after the injury and it is having an effect on the family, then you may need some extra support. Please contact the Burns team, or your G.P. to discuss options.

Distress may be expressed as:

- Changes in appetite
- Sleep disturbance, nightmares and night terrors
- Anxiety (worry), sadness and tearfulness
- Flashbacks to the incident and/or treatment – i.e. feeling like it's happening all over again
- Thinking about the incident repeatedly
- Anxiety about coming to hospital appointments/having procedures
- Feeling irritable
- Physical symptoms - e.g. headaches, stomach aches
- Avoiding any reminders including talking and thinking about what happened

Other worries you can have may be about different aspects of your injury and experience. This might be the physical pain, itching, or changes in movement of the affected body part. It may also include worry about the appearance of your burn and how others may react. If you have had time away from work or study, you may worry about returning and catching up on missed work.



The Social Impact of Burns

After experiencing a burn injury, you may notice a social impact. You may feel less sociable, you may want to be on your own more often, or you may feel more irritated with the people around you.

This can be for a number of reasons. People sometimes worry about how other people will react to their burn injury if it has affected their appearance. Additionally, experiencing a burn injury can sometimes make people feel different from those around them.

Social changes you may notice:

- Increased irritability
- Difficulty talking to people
- Desire to avoid social interaction
- Wanting to stay home
- Not being able to talk about the injury
- Not knowing how to talk about the injury with people

Talking with your Children



Whatever their age, talking helps children to make sense of things, to express feelings, and cope with what has happened to them. Even very young child likes to understand what is going on. You may find talking about it difficult too but try not to avoid the subject.

Talk in ways suitable to their age and use words they understand. Young children will need simple, short explanations, maybe using drawing or pictures to help their understanding.

Older children may want to know more details about what happened and talk about their feelings. They may or may not wish to express both the good and the difficult things about their life after the injury.

Reassure your child that mixed feelings are normal, correct any misunderstandings they may have about what happened and reassure them.

Encourage them to talk to you if they have any concerns. If you find this too distressing, encourage them to talk with another close relative or friend and think about whether you may need further support to help you come to terms with what happened.

Relationships and Sexual Activity



Relationships will be different for all concerned i.e. friends, children, partner, parents and colleagues, essentially anyone with whom you have a relationship. You may find that stress, tiredness, low mood and worry affect your relationships. Again, this is quite common.

Some people may have concerns about sexual activity. This might be because of physical discomfort, pain, skin sensitivity or tiredness. It might also be due to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or worries about how your body looks. It is important to talk to your partner about your concerns and try to address them together. With time and understanding sexual difficulties can be resolved. This again is quite normal. You will all need time to adjust.

If you experience ongoing relationship difficulties, talk to your GP who will direct you to appropriate sources of help – the organisation RELATE works with couples with relationship difficulties and usually has branches locally.

Coping Skills

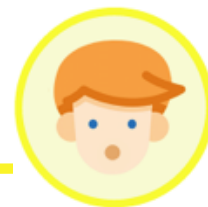


Experiencing a burn injury can be a difficult and distressing experience and it is important to acknowledge this and find a way to move forward. You will already have coping skills you developed prior to the burn injury.

These skills can be useful for helping you recover psychologically from your burn injury. While these skills will be different for everyone, some common coping techniques are:

- Talking to friends and family (this can include talking about the burn injury or talking about anything but!)
- Breathing exercises
- Gratitude journals (i.e. writing down positive experiences and things you are grateful for)
- Distraction through TV, films, social media, etc.
- Crying if you feel like crying – feeling our emotions is important and suppressing them can make recovery more challenging
- Allowing yourself time to rest
- Speaking to yourself kindly and treating yourself with compassion – remember, it has been a difficult experience, and it can take time for you to feel better.

Dealing with Other People's Reactions



People are naturally curious. If you have a noticeable visible difference following your injury, you may experience questions, comments and increased attention. Usually these comments are not meant in a mean way they can leave you feeling anxious about how to respond. Additionally, you may not feel ready to talk about it.

The first step in dealing with this situation is to acknowledge whether you are ready to talk about it. If you're not ready, it is completely acceptable to say "I'm not ready to talk about it yet" or "it is difficult to talk about".

If you feel able to talk about it, you can follow this three-step process, which is particularly useful when fielding questions from children.

EXPLAIN	what happened	<i>"I was burned in a fire....."</i>
REASSURE	themselves and others that it's ok	<i>but it doesn't hurt, I'm fine now.</i>
DISTRACT	them from asking other questions:	<i>Did you watch Corrie / the game last night?"</i>

Sometimes you may notice people staring. It can be helpful to practice ways of managing this. For example: make eye contact with the person who is staring; smile at them and pass the time of day. If they continue to stare, be prepared to ask them not to stare, to distract them by talking about something else or to walk away.

If you are anxious about social situations, try to build your confidence in more familiar situations first - e.g. with family and friends. As you help them cope, they will be more confident about dealing with less familiar situations.

The charity, Changing Faces, also have some good tips on their website about how to manage people's reactions. See page 43.



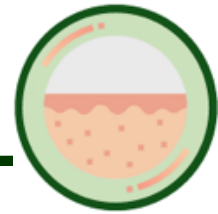
Where Can I Find Further Help?

If you are worried about any aspect of you, your partner's or your child's emotional adjustment following your burn injury, please talk to your Health Visitor, or contact the Clinical Psychologist via Odstock Ward.

If you find that you are feeling low for several days you may find it helpful to discuss your feelings with your partner or friend or to make an appointment with your G.P. Your G.P. can put you in touch with local psychology services such as IAPT (16yrs+) or CAMHS (children) with whom you, or any family member, can discuss your particular problem, in confidence

You can find a list of helpful organisations on pages 42-45.

Skin Changes



With a burn or scald injury it is probable that there will be some scarring. This depends on the depth of the burn and the length of time that it takes to heal.

It is impossible to predict the severity of the scarring that will occur. It depends on: -

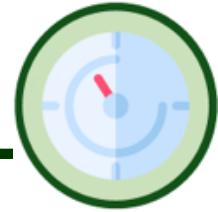
- the size of the burn
- location on the body
- depth of the burn
- your skin type
- genetic factors

Scar tissue undergoes changes in colour (red/purple/blue), texture and flexibility over time. Eventually, most of the scar will become paler, soft and supple.

To help control scarring and skin tightness we recommend that you: -

- **Exercise and stretches** as you have been taught, to keep joints mobile. (see pages 34 and 35)
- **Keep active.** Not only will this help with mobility but will help lift morale.
- **Massage** and cream the scars as you have been advised to help keep the scarring as supple as possible. (see page 8)
- It is important that you wear any **splints or pressure garments** as you have been advised to and make sure that they are well fitting. This will help reduce the tightening of the scar. (see pages 31 and 35)

Changes in Body Temperature



It is *normal* to find that the body does not regulate temperature in the same way as it used to before the injury. You may feel hot when you would not expect to. You may also find that you sweat differently.

No one can predict how long these changes will last. We advise that you wear layers of clothing that can be taken off or put on as necessary. It is important that you remember to drink enough water if you have a tendency to feel hot.



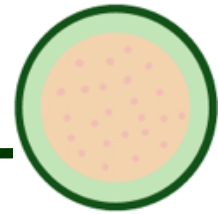
Changes in Scar Colour

Scar or donor areas may appear dark pink, deep red or purple. Discolouration of burn or scald areas is normal because of changes in the blood circulation and the make-up of the newly healed skin. Scarring doesn't always follow a pattern. Usually, the scarring will start pink, going through dark pink to red to dark red and then to purple as it matures.

The change in colour may be more noticeable at different times, when the body temperature changes or when you are doing activities which increase your heart rate.

The skin's natural colour might return to areas that have superficial or partial thickness burns after several months. Deeper burns may have some permanent discolouration. Skin which has had a deeper burn will always be a different colour compared to the surrounding skin.

Skin Problems – Blisters



The newly healed skin will be quite delicate for several months and will have a tendency to develop little blisters which may seem to appear for no specific reason. They may occur as a result of rubbing from clothes or pressure garments or after a knock.

It is important not to pop the blisters if they appear normal i.e. not infected. Keep the area clean. You can expect the blister to pop or get smaller by itself. The tendency for blisters to form gradually disappears over time.

Pressure garments should not be worn until the blistered area has healed.

Do continue to use the cream but do not apply cream to any open areas and massage delicate skin with care.



Skin Problems – Swelling

This may continue to be a problem for some time. To help control swelling: -

- Wear the pressure garments
- Exercise regularly

Affected arms and legs should be elevated on pillows when you are sitting or resting.

Skin Problems – Itching



This is a common problem and is a result of nerve endings growing back, which are often damaged through the injury or surgery. Although there is no complete cure, with time, itching should decrease. It can be worse in the summer and at night when the body will be warmer, therefore keeping cool will help. It can cause loss of sleep and appetite. The following may help to minimise the problem: -

- Good skin care is essential. When moisturising, keeping the cream in the fridge and using it cold, can increase the relief obtained when moisturising.
- Bathe the area with cool water, using a flannel soaked in cold water or frequent cool baths, may bring some relief.
- Wash pressure garments carefully. Avoid strong washing powder. Ensure that soap powder is thoroughly rinsed out.
- Wear cotton clothes and sleep in cotton sheets. Wool and nylon will tend to increase skin temperature and therefore increase itching.
- Try not to scratch as this might cause the skin to break down. Cut your nails and use cotton gloves overnight.
- Apply pressure to the area.
- Antihistamines can help to reduce itching and allergic reactions. These are inexpensive and available over-the-counter in Pharmacies. Our clinical staff recommend Chlorphenamine as the most effective.
- Once the skin is well healed you can try other products, such as different moisturisers, to help minimise the itching.
- Laser treatment may be beneficial and can be discussed in clinic.

Quick Check Table for Skin Problems

PROBLEM	WHY MIGHT THIS HAPPEN
<p>Blisters may occur on the burn or scalded areas as well as on donor sites. They are common for the first few months.</p>	<p>Rubbing from clothing or pressure garments or from accidental knocks to the skin.</p>
<p>Skin breakdown that can happen over a long period of time.</p>	<p>Small knocks, rubbing, scratching or infection.</p>
<p>Whiteheads and blackheads are a common problem which decrease over time.</p>	<p>They can be caused by things such as cream, dirt or soap collecting in the uneven scar tissue.</p>
<p>Cysts may occur in the first six months and can be very uncomfortable. They may appear as red, black or yellow raised lumps under the surface of the skin.</p>	<p>Cysts can occur as a result of small areas of skin, or dirt becoming trapped under the skin leading to a localised infection.</p>

TREATMENT	HOW COULD IT BE PREVENTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave the blister alone • Do not pop it • Use a dressing to protect the blister under your clothing and garments • If the blister becomes larger or infected contact your practice nurse or Odstock Ward for advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow your skin care instructions carefully • Make sure that your pressure garment fits well • Change your pressure garments daily • Wash pressure garments daily • Avoid tight fitting clothing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Odstock Ward for advice • Your pressure garments may be causing the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the above information • Try not to knock your vulnerable area • Do not scratch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently wash the area with a soft sponge and soap in warm water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good skin hygiene is essential • Careful washing of your skin to remove old cream before applying the new is very important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soak in warm water and then gently wash the area with a circular motion using a soft sponge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good skin hygiene is essential

Burns Scar Management Clinic



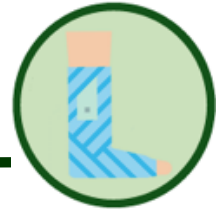
The Scar Management Clinic is a multidisciplinary clinic, led by a therapist and clinical scientist, who have access to nurses, consultants, psychologists, and other specialists. If you are at risk of scarring following your burn injury, you will be given an appointment for the scar clinic; usually within 1 month of being healed.

The aim of the clinic is to help you care for your newly healed skin and provide information and treatment. This will help to improve the appearance and suppleness of the scars. A therapist may also assess your movement, function, and suggest ways to improve this if necessary.

A decision will be made as to whether you would benefit from silicone gel treatment, pressure garments, or any other scar management products or therapies. This will all be discussed with you during the clinic appointment.

You may receive support from the clinic for up to two years. This depends on how your scar matures. You are likely to have appointments every three to four months.

What Are Pressure Garments?



These are close fitting garments made of Lycra. They are either off the shelf garments for use when the skin is delicate, or made to measure garments. You will be encouraged to wear the garment for many hours both day and night.

The staff in the Scar Management Clinic will explain about the garments and their use. They will also advise you about when the garments should be worn particularly if there are small unhealed areas of skin. Pressure garments should not be worn if there are significant areas of unhealed skin or blisters.

The appearance of the scars will be improved by the pressure put on them from these garments.

At home, make sure that they fit well. When the garments are new, you may feel they are quite tight. You might need to wear your garment for short periods to begin with, gradually increasing the wearing time until you are able to wear them for the length of time prescribed.

Other products or treatments may be recommended for some of the scarring. The staff will advise you about this.



How Can Lasers Help?



The Laser clinic has a long history of treating burn scars using lasers. It is situated at the end of the Plastics corridor on Level 3 of the hospital. Members of staff in the Scar Management Clinic will help to identify scars that would be suitable for laser treatment. The laser treatments would be performed at an outpatient appointment. The scars can be treated using one of two lasers.

The first laser (Pulsed Dye Laser) can help with the symptoms of both redness and itch. Benefit has also been seen in the reduction of both pain and scar thickness. Some patients have also reported an improvement in range of movement as the laser may increase the suppleness of any firm scar. This laser works better on red scars that are in the early inflammatory stage of development. Treatment would therefore generally start within 3 - 6 months of the wound healing.

The second laser (Fractionated Erbium:YAG or Carbon Dioxide) is used to flatten or soften mature, raised and firm scars that are often paler in colour.

Treatment with either laser is relatively painless and is said to feel “like being flicked with an elastic band”. However, it does depend on the pain threshold of the patient and the use of anaesthetic may be necessary for children or young adults. In some cases, a local anaesthetic cream may be applied to the area to be treated an hour before treatment. Occasionally a general anaesthetic may be preferred by your consultant. The options for anaesthetic will be discussed before any course of laser treatment.

What are Silicone Gel Treatments?



Silicone gel treatments include topical gels or a kind of patch called sheeting. These may be used on your scar to help improve the colour, texture and thickness of scar tissue. It can also help to reduce any itching, discomfort or irritation. Although they will not make the scar disappear, they may improve the look and feel of your scar.



Skin Camouflage

Skin camouflage is the application of specialist cover creams to improve the appearance of scarring and other disfiguring skin conditions, including scarring from burns.

The creams are used to conceal blemishes and they provide effective, long lasting, waterproof cover on any area of the body.

You can discuss using skin camouflage during your outpatient's appointment, where a referral can be made to the skin camouflage service.

Medical Tattooing



Medical Tattooing is a technique that can be used to improve your appearance in particularly on the face. This will need to be discussed with your consultant.

More information can be found at:
katiepiperfoundation.org.uk/medical-tattooing/

Exercises



You will have been given advice while in hospital about the importance of exercise to regain and maintain movement. This is most likely to have been given to you by a physiotherapist or a nurse.

It is important that any exercises that you have been given are done regularly a minimum of 2 – 3 times a day.

These exercises need to continue until you feel that you are able to maintain your movement through your normal everyday activities. Even then you may find that you need to do the exercises occasionally.

If you are concerned that you are not moving as well as expected you should contact Odstock Ward to talk to a physiotherapist.

It is sometimes easier to exercise in the warmth of the bath. However, remember that the exercises should be done at other times of the day as well.

Set small targets to help you to achieve the exercises and increase movement.

Be flexible in your approach and vary them depending on how you are feeling and other activities you are doing.

Stretches



If the burn has happened to skin that goes over a joint you will need to stretch to maintain or to regain movement. As the skin heals it will get tighter and reduce movement. You will be taught stretches by the physiotherapists to help minimise this problem. It is important to do these regularly. If you have any concerns you can contact the Burns Therapists via Odstock Ward.



Do I Have to Wear My Splints?

Splints are very useful in helping to maintain or improve range of movement in joints. If you are having a problem with keeping movement in a joint, you may be given a splint made from a plastic material. This will be specifically made by a therapist. You will be advised when the splint should be worn and its use will be explained.

After you have been discharged from the hospital you will need to check that the splint always fits properly. If it does not fit, or it is not doing its job properly, contact your therapist and arrange for the splint to be reviewed.

Returning to Work



You need to seek advice from your hospital doctor or nursing staff about when you could return to work.

We would encourage you to return to work as soon as you feel able in order to help you regain a normal pattern of life.

You will probably need to discuss your return to work and any special needs you may have with your employer to help your return to work be as smooth as possible.



Returning to Leisure Activities

Getting back to former leisure activities will depend on the injury and the sport.

It may be necessary to do some stretches before and after any activity.

You may find that you get more overheated during physical activity, so remember to drink enough water to compensate for fluid loss. You may also find that you sweat differently after your burn. It is also important to make sure your clothing is not going to cause problems by being too tight or rub and cause friction.

Swimming



Swimming is possible once the burn has fully healed.

Swimming Pools - A high chlorine content in the water may cause itching or a rash, so it is important that you shower thoroughly at the end of the swimming session.

Moisturising cream should be applied afterwards.

Swimming Outdoors or in the Sea - If you are swimming in an outdoor pool or in the sea, make sure that you wear waterproof sun cream over the burned areas. You should also wear a shirt and initially only stay in the water for half an hour at a time. Try to rinse the skin thoroughly and apply more sun cream after you come out of the water.

Can I Go Out in The Sun?



It is essential for you to protect your skin from the sun.

Following a burn injury, we advise that you do not sunbathe at all. As your skin is likely to burn, always use a high protection sunscreen when out in the sun. See over the page for advice on choosing a sun cream.

Follow these directions carefully: -

- Avoid direct sunlight on the affected areas for **at least** two years after healing has occurred.
- **Always use a sun cream.** It should be designed for sensitive skin and applied to areas that you are unable to protect with clothing, even on a cloudy day. Sun cream needs to be re-applied according to the manufacturer's instructions and particularly after swimming.
- Clothing should be worn over the pressure garments. The most comfortable clothing will be made from cotton, silk or linen. The pressure garments will not protect the skin from the sun as they allow 60% of the sun's rays through. UV clothing can be obtained from supermarkets and there are some companies who specialise in sun protective clothing.
- Schedule activities to take place in the cool of the day if possible. Avoid the hottest time of day between 11.00am and 3.00pm for outdoor activities.
- Sunburn can still occur while sitting under sun canopies and on cloudy days.

Choosing A Sun Cream – UVA and UVB Protection



It is important that you wear a sun cream which provides good protection for both UVA **AND** UVB exposure. Recent scientific experiments suggest that it is important to look at UVA as well as UVB factors. UVB causes burning, but now UVA is believed to play a greater role in skin cancer than previously thought although it does not cause burning to the same extent as UVB.

Although sunscreens do not provide the same protection against UVA as they do against UVB it remains important to wear a high factor sun protection.

Sunscreen UVB continues to be indicated by a factor rating e.g. 20, 30 etc. A star rating indicates UVA protection. The highest star-rated cream available is 5-star.

**We recommend using factor 50
for at least 2 years post burn.**

The usual guidelines for sun exposure, such as covering up, seeking shade and avoiding the midday sun still apply.

Burns Weekend Retreats



Weekend retreats are organised by other charities such as the Young Adult Burns Association South West (YABASW) and the Dan's Fund.

Their aim is total inclusivity. All those who attend have burn scars of some sort. Even though some are quite minor and some are very extensive, everyone can take part in every activity. You can take part in or outdoor activities, like abseiling and exclusive access to places like swimming pools is often organised.

The retreats provide an opportunity to feel relaxed among others and meet those who have had similar experiences. Those who attend build strong friendships, continuing to support each other through social networking. What is most evident is how it helps survivors of burns injuries to build their confidence.

Those who attend often say they feel more confident and have made friends with those who are feeling the same. They also found listening to other people's life stories helped them with their issues.

BUGS can fund for you to attend one of the retreats. If you are interested in attending, please contact The Nurse in Charge Nurse on Odstock Ward, or visit our website: bugssalisbury.co.uk

A Message from My Trusty™ Sunflower Cream

Salisbury Hospital Burns & Plastic skincare specialists researched and developed an award winning, natural moisturiser. When skin is damaged or impaired, additional levels of linoleic acid (vitamin F) are needed to aid the healing process. Natural sunflower oil was chosen as a primary ingredient due to its high linoleic acid content, beneficial for moisturising the skin and its antibacterial properties.

Clinically proven, and dermatologically tested, My Trusty™ is safe to use on all skin types and ages including babies upwards of 8-weeks old. Our NHS moisturiser will help relieve/soothe dry itchy skin and improve the appearance of scar tissue. The non-perfumed, aqueous (water-based) sunflower cream comes in two sizes (100ml & 250ml).

Apart from leaving your skin feeling smooth and soft, what's really nice is that all proceeds are reinvested back into NHS patient care. So, it's not just your skin that's left feeling great!

How to Try or Buy!

If you haven't tried My Trusty™ free samples are available. Contact the My Trusty™ team on 01284 766261 or email salesoffice@ry.tm

Get 20% Discount on all My Trusty™ Products

Offered to outpatients of Odstock or Sarum wards only, when bought direct from mytrustyskincare.co.uk Use coupon code '**bugs20**'.



Helpful Organisations



Adult Burns Support UK - adultburnsupportuk.org

Resources and information on the aftercare and support available to burn-injured adults in the UK. Provides an online forum and a weekly online live chat for users to share and discuss burn related experiences. Funded by Dan's Fund, the forum is every Wednesday (7.30– 9.00pm) on the Adult Burn Support UK website.

British Red Cross –

redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-support-at-home

Provides short-term loans (e.g. medical equipment, a transport service, Care in The Home package) after people have had a hospital stay, as well as therapeutic care.

44 Moorfields, London. EC2Y 9AL

Tel: 0344 871 1111

email: contactus@redcross.org.uk

Area Offices:

Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire.

Tel: 01235 552 665

email: ilcrsouthciadmin@redcross.org.uk

Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Surrey, Isle of Wight

Tel: 01622 690 011

email: ilcr_southeastadmin@redcross.org.uk

British Burns Association – britishburnassociation.org

A charity for people interested in supporting and promoting burn care in the UK and Ireland, for the benefit of the general public. Its core aims are to educate and to encourage research into all aspects of burn injury, its treatment and prevention.

British Burn Association
at Royal College of Surgeons of England
35 – 43 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PE
T: 020 78696923
E: info@britishburnassociation.org

Changing Faces - changingfaces.org.uk

A national charity providing free help, support, information and skin camouflage advice for adults and children is relevant to a wide number of conditions that affect appearance.

The Squire Centre, 33-37 University Street, London. WC1E 6JN
Tel: 0345 450 0275
email: info@changingfaces.org.uk

Dan’s Fund for Burns - dansfundforburns.org

A national charity providing practical support for Burn Survivors.

4 Dagden Road, Shalford, Surrey, GU4 8DD
Tel: 07526 847699
email: info@dansfundforburns.org

Helpful Organisations Continued...

Healthtalk.org - healthtalk.org/Burn-Injuries/overview

Developed through research conducted by a team at the Centre for Appearance Research. A website that features the real experiences of people who have been affected by scalds or burn injuries.

The Katie Piper Foundation - katiepiperfoundation.org.uk

A national charity set up to help people with burns and scars to reconnect with their lives and their communities.

PO Box 334, 19-21 Crawford St, London. W1H 1PJ
Support Line: 07496 827266
email: info@katiepiperfoundation.org.uk

Relate – relate.org.uk

Provides relationship counselling and support for couples, families and children.

Relate, Premier House, Carolina Court, Lakeside, Doncaster
DN4 5RA.
Tel: 0300 100 1234
email: relate.enquiries@relate.org.uk

Skin Camouflage Advice Service - changingfaces.org.uk/services-support/skin-camouflage-service/

A tailored Skin Camouflage Service using creams and powders to reduce the appearance of a mark, scar or skin condition.
Funded by Changing Faces

Tel: 0300 012 0276
email skincam@changingfaces.org.uk

TalkHealth - talkhealthpartnership.com/talkscars

A website aimed to make health support easily accessible to everyone, offering interactivity between health professionals, charities and fellow patients and their carers.

Young Adult Burns Association South West - fabclub.org.uk/links

YABASW is a closed group for people 18 and over who have survived a burn injury. It is a self-help support group. This page is for advertising events and for young adults to talk and discuss with each other in a safe environment.

YoungMinds - youngminds.org.uk

A national charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people. It provides advice, support, information for young people and parents.

Parents Helpline – 0808 802 5544

Top Tips



Here is a list of all the tips discussed in this booklet. Tick or highlight the ones that you want to try.

Emotional coping skills

- Talking to friends and family (this can include talking about the burn injury or talking about anything but!)
- Breathing exercises
- Gratitude journals (i.e. writing down positive experiences and things you are grateful for)
- Distraction through TV, films, social media, etc.
- Crying if you feel like crying – feeling our emotions is important and suppressing them can make recovery more challenging
- Allowing yourself time to rest
- Speaking to yourself kindly and treating yourself with compassion – remember, it has been a difficult experience, and it can take time for you to feel better

Social coping skills

- Build your confidence in social situations by being around familiar people
- Decide whether you're ready to talk about your burn injury yet
- When fielding questions from children or strangers, (1) explain, (2) reassure and (3) distract
- Ask people not to stare or ask if they have any questions about your injury

Returning to normal life

- Set 'wake up' and 'sleep' times
- Plan mealtimes
- Try to avoid staying inside the house all day Communicate with work if you can
- If you are nervous about going out, go somewhere familiar for a brief visit (e.g. local shop, friend's house, etc.)
- Do not make too many changes at once
- Be kind to yourself – especially if you cannot yet return to your usual activity levels
- Write a list of your achievements during your recovery. It can be helpful to look back and can review how you have progressed. We have provided space over the page for you to do this.

References and Credits

- 'The BUGS Booklet. I'm Leaving Hospital – What Now?'
Published by BUGS Salisbury District Hospital, 2006
- Home at Last!
Published by McIndoe Burns Support Group, East Grinstead
- Burns Scar Management Clinic Patient Information Leaflet,
Salisbury District Hospital
- The Salisbury Laser Clinic Leaflet – 'Spending Time
Outdoors'
Salisbury District Hospital
- Wound / Scar - After Care Guidance
Dr Mark Brewin, Clinical Scientist (PhD, MSc, BSc(Hons),
DipIPEM).
- RAFT, Leopold Muller Building, Mount Vernon Hospital,
Northwood, Middlesex. HA6 2RN
- Jobskin Ltd, Unit 13a, Harrington Mill, Leopold Street, Long
Eaton, Nottingham, NG10 4QG
- bugssalisbury.co.uk
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Disclaimer for The Booklet

BUGS has taken care to ensure that the information presented in this booklet is accurate at the time of going to press. The information is relevant to patients and ex-patients and their families or carers at Salisbury District Hospital. BUGS cannot accept any responsibility for any inappropriate use of the information.

