

Burns: Wearing a Pressure Garment

Burns require special care in the first 12 to 18 months. When the skin has healed and the dressings are very small, or no longer being used, the doctor may prescribe pressure garments to help stop scars from forming.

The OT (occupational therapist) will take exact measurements. Then the garments will be custom made for your child. Once your child has two properly fitting pressure garments, they are to be worn **at all times** day and night, except during dressing changes (if needed), bathing and lotioning. Two sets are provided as that one may be worn while the other is washed.

Daily Care of the Burned Area

- Wash the child's healed burn daily with a mild soap. Rinse well. Pat dry.
- Apply _____ moisturizer to the burned area at least 3-4 times each day.
- Apply any necessary gel sheets or inserts.
- Apply pressure garments.

Activity

- Your doctor will answer any questions you may have about your child's activities. If the doctor does not limit your child's play, encourage your child to take part in normal play at home and at school (Picture 1).
- Your child may play in wading pools, sprinklers and even chlorine pools if your doctor allows these activities. An extra or an old garment should be worn for water play because the chlorine in pools and the sand in beach water weakens the elastic in the garment.
- Replace wet garments with dry ones after water play.
- Remember that your child can get sunburn through the garment. Clothing should be worn over the garment. A sunblock, with an SPF of at least 30, should be used on all healed burned areas. It is best that your child plays outdoors early in the morning or late in the afternoon to decrease the chance of sunburn.



Picture 1 Encourage your child to play normally.

Care of the Garment

Wash the pressure garment **every day**. You may wash by hand or by machine. Use warm water and your regular laundry detergent. Machine-wash at least once a week to get it thoroughly clean. **Do not use hot water, bleach, or cold water washing solution (such as Woolite[®]) or softener.**

For machine washing:

- Put the garment and laundry detergent in warm or cool water.
- Wash on the gentle cycle.
- **Air-dry only.** Unless your dryer has a completely heat free setting.

For hand washing:

- Let the garment soak in warm water and laundry detergent for several minutes.
- Rinse well with clean, warm water.
- Roll the garment in a towel to soak up the extra water.
- **Air-dry only.** Unless your dryer has a completely heat free setting.

Do not put the garment in the clothes dryer, in the sunlight or in front of a heater.

When to Call the Therapist

Call your therapist if:

- Garment is too tight and seems to be cutting into the skin.
- Garment does not fit snugly. There should be no wrinkles except for the few that appear where the elbow is bent, across the ankle, etc.
- Swelling or redness is present. Remove the garment if the fingernails look blue, or if your child complains of tingling or burning.

Other Information

- Your doctor or therapist may suggest that you use a gel sheet or other insert under the garment to aid in providing proper pressure and/or added moisture to the burned area.
- Special care is given to burns on the face, feet, and toes. If your child's burns are in these areas, your doctor and therapist may suggest another type of custom-made article to be worn for added pressure.
- Because your child's body size is always changing, he or she may need to be measured for a new garment about every 3-5 months in the Burn Clinic or the Occupational Therapy Department.

If you have any questions or concerns, call your occupational therapist at

614-722-4250.