

# BURN WOUND CARE WITH TOPICAL ANTIBIOTICS

**Skin acts as a barrier against infection. Once you lose your skin, it increases your chance for infection to occur. Taking care of your burn is very important. The following are ways to prevent infection and other problems from occurring.**

## FIRST, LET'S TALK ABOUT BURNS:

- Keep burned areas elevated above the level of the heart if possible.
- Take pain medications as directed.
- Antibiotics are not always ordered unless signs and symptoms of infection are present.
- If burns are to the lower legs and feet, apply ace wraps.
- It is common for arms and/or legs that are burned to hurt, throb, and/or tingle when using them. So, it is important to continue exercising your arms, legs, and hands if injured. This will prevent loss of movement.
- Wheelchairs and crutches are usually not ordered by your doctor.
- You may continue to have occasional pain and itching even after your burns or grafts have been healed. Try using Tylenol or Ibuprofen as directed, and speak to your doctor if the pain gets too bad.
- Sometimes you will have different types of feelings on your burns even after they have healed. This is because your nerve endings are trying to heal. These feelings are normal and may take a long time to go away. Some of the feelings you may have are:
  - Numbness
  - Stinging
  - Burning
  - Tingling
  - Shooting pains
  - "Ants crawling"

## CLEANING AND DRESSING YOUR BURN WOUNDS

- Take pain medication about 30 minutes before bathing or doing dressing changes to ease the pain. Pain medication will NOT take away all pain.
- Clean tub or shower before and after wound care to prevent spreading infection.
- Take a bath/shower using a soft spray. Wash with soap and water. Soaps like Dial, Safeguard, or Ivory contain antimicrobial properties. Avoid soaps with perfumes.
- When bathing, use two washcloths; one just for your burn wounds, and another for the rest of your body.
- Gently wash the burn wounds with a small amount of pressure, making sure you get all ointments and creams off. Make sure that you wash on top of the wound as well as around the wound.
- Pat wounds dry with a towel. Allow to air dry at least 15 minutes.
- Drainage is expected. As your wound begins to heal, a small amount of bleeding may take place. This is normal. Apply pressure for 5 minutes with a towel and it should stop. This is a sign of healing.



**Burn Center: (225) 387-7717 (24-hours a day)**  
3600 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

## DRESSING WITH TOPICAL ANTIBIOTICS

- Dress wounds with the ointment/cream ordered by your doctor. The most commonly used topical ointments/creams are Silvadene, Silvasorb Gel, Bactroban, and Bacitracin.
- Silvadene is a white antibiotic cream used to help prevent infection. Our Silvadene is on folded sheets of gauze so it will be easier to put on.
- When cutting Silvadene gauze provided by the burn unit, use scissors cleaned with hot water and alcohol.
- Open Silvadene gauze to a full size sheet (24in x 24in).
- Cut the amount needed to cover the burn wound. Take care not to overlap too much onto non-burned skin.
- Hold dressings in place with Burn Net as shown by the Burn Technician.
- If you run out of supplies, you may use Neosporin and gauze from the drug store until you can get more supplies.
- If using regular Silvadene cream not already on gauze, apply a thin layer of cream to the wound using clean hand or tongue blade, or apply the cream onto a vaseline gauze (Adaptic if available), then apply to wound. Wrap with outer gauze and secure with burn net tape or ace wraps.
- If using Silvasorb Gel, Bactroban, or Bacitracin, apply a thin layer of ointment/gel onto vaseline gauze (Adaptic if available) or plain gauze, then apply to wound. Wrap with outer gauze and secure with burn net tape or ace wraps.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION

Signs and symptoms of infection are:

- redness in the normal skin surrounding the burn
- fever 102.5-103°
- increased swelling
- increased pain
- foul smelling drainage

**Contact the Burn Center if these symptoms occur.**

## SKIN CARE AFTER BURNS HAVE HEALED

- Bathe/shower using a soft spray. Use soaps that contain moisturizers like Dove Soap. Avoid soaps with perfumes.
- Once your burn areas have healed, it is common for you skin to feel “tight”.
- Lotions, such as **Lubriderm, Cocoa Butter, Baby Oil, and Vaseline Intensive Care lotion** will help to keep the skin moist and allow the skin to “stretch” more easily when you exercise.
- Apply lotions several times a day and massage into skin using gentle pressure. This also helps to stretch the skin and helps to decrease scarring.
- While out in sun, it may be necessary to wear long sleeves or pants if your arms or legs have been burned, as your skin is still new and may burn easily.
- Because you might not be able to “sweat” like you did before you were burned, you may not be able to stand temperatures that are too HOT or too COLD. Try to stay in a cool place if you become overheated.
- Use sunscreen when out in sun and limit the time you are in direct sunlight.
- Once your wounds have healed, you may experience occasional blistering. Blisters form due to rubbing of the new skin.
- If blisters form, cover them with gauze or a band-aid to protect them. If the blisters burst, use Neosporin and a band-aid to cover them.
- Please call the Burn Center if blisters continue to get larger and don’t seem to heal.
- Itching can be a bother and a problem if scratching causes raw spots to newly healed skin or grafts.
- If you have a problem with itching, stay in a cool environment, use lotion to dry areas, and take Benadryl as directed.



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## MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUCTIONS

- Follow-up visits are very important. Keep all your visits that we have made for you.
- If you cannot keep your visit, please call and cancel at least 24 hours in advance so that your visit time can be given to someone else.
- Bring all supplies to each visit.
- When you arrive for your visit, enter through the main lobby. You may valet park your car in front of the hospital. This is a free service for our patients.
- You must go to the Registration Desk prior to your visit.
- Be sure to take your pain medicines before coming to the Burn Center for your visits. Always bring these medicines with you for your visit in case you need a refill.
- If you need your medicines refilled, please call your doctor during normal business hours. On weekends and after hours, you may not be able to get these refilled in some cases.
- If your supplies run out before your next visit to us, please call the unit to let us know and we will instruct you on what to do. Please call the unit for any questions and concerns.
- If you or your family/significant others are having difficulty in coping, home care, or getting around since your accident, please feel free to contact the Burn Unit Social Worker at (225) 381-6466.

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### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Your Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Doctor's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Burn Center: (225) 387-7717 (24-hours a day)

Your Outpatient Nurse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Outpatient Nurse's Phone Number: (225) 381-6283 \_\_\_\_\_

Outpatient Nurse's hours are from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday- Friday.  
For problems or questions after hours,  
please call the 24-hour number, (225) 387-7717.

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