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Aftercare Information for Facial Burns

Welsh Centre for Burns and plastic Surgery





Having a burn injury to your face can be a traumatic experience and may cause a number of difficulties. This leaflet explains the treatment you will have for your facial burn, common problems that arise and things you can do to help with your treatment.

Treatment of your burn

As part of caring for your facial burn you will

- Be offered painkillers
- Have your face washed in unperfumed warm soapy water
- Have your beard and hair line shaved if affected
- Have a decision made regarding the need to be admitted to Hospital or whether you can be managed at home.
- Be treated with a paraffin based product which will be applied to keep your face moist to help with wound healing.

Generally not so deep/superficial burn wounds will be red for the next seven to fourteen days post injury. However if your burn is deeper it will take longer to heal and may need surgery, it will take longer to heal and may need review by the surgeons..

You will be encouraged to shave, shower and wash your hair daily using unperfumed/ mild shampoo and continue this when you are home.

Advice for swelling

Your face will swell quite a lot over the first week and this may mean that you are unable to open your eyes. This can be frightening but it is important to remember that this usually settles down within the week. It is strongly advised that you sit upright in the chair or on the bed and avoid lying flat, as this will increase the swelling to your face.

Pain relief medicine

You may have been prescribed pain killers by the doctor. Ensure that you take these regularly. Some people also find breathing exercises or distraction (such as listening to music) can help manage pain.

Exercises

You will need to perform all these exercises below regularly throughout the day. At least six times per day is recommended. Work up to being able

to achieve 10 repetitions for a hold of 10 seconds. Remember that the first ones you do will be painful, but the more you do the pain and movement will get better.

Raise your eyebrows upwards

Close your eyes as tight as possible and then open them to their widest

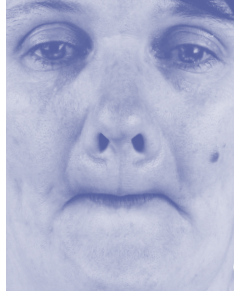
Scrunch up your nose as tight as possible then



stretch it back out again



Pull your top lip down over your top teeth and relax



Pull bottom lip up over your bottom teeth and relax



Open your mouth as wide as possible and relax



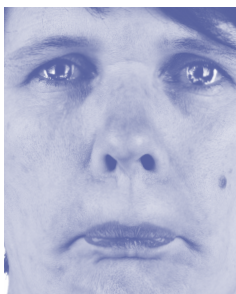
Smile as wide as possible and then relax



Place tongue between upper lip and gums and stretch skin outwards then relax again



Place tongue inside lower lip in front of gums and push tongue outwards then relax



Now that you have completed your exercises, you will hopefully feel your face is much looser. It is



important to keep eating and drinking normally as your face will stiffen up quickly between each session.

If you have any specific tightness the physiotherapist may review these exercises with you and add in extra stretches for inside the mouth. If, following this, you are not able to maintain full range of movement, the Occupational Therapist will assess whether you require splints for your mouth or special equipment to help you perform your exercises more effectively.

You can stop doing your exercises when you are able to maintain full range of movement without tightness.

Appearance concerns

You may find that you are concerned about the way you look since the injury and may be worried that as the burn dries out that a dark thick scab forms. This is normal and is to be expected. You may also be concerned about possible long term scarring. You can discuss your concerns with any member of staff looking after you. However, if these problems persist we can arrange for you to have further support from our psychologist who will be able to discuss your concerns in more detail and help you think about how to cope with these.

In Summary

You will be encouraged to take more responsibility to care for your face with:

- Facial washing may need to continue three times a day with application of paraffin based product. Daily hair wash and shaving is also recommended.
- Moisturising with E45 cream can commence when your skin is fully healed.
- Once healed, your skin will be very fragile initially and you will need to avoid direct sunlight for two years.

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- Wear a hat and apply sun block (SPF 50) to your face for two years following injury. This will reduce the risk of permanent changes to skin colour/pigment and avoid future sunburn.





First Published Jan 2015 Version 1.1

Next Review Date December 2022

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