

Taking a Shower with Burns

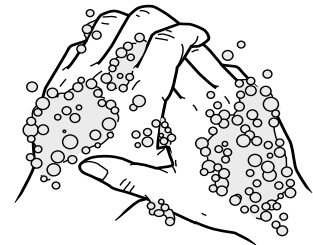


THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Follow these steps for taking a shower when you have burn wounds to protect your healing skin. You may have different kinds of dressings depending on where the burn is on your body and how deep it is. The basic steps are the same, with some special instructions for certain types of dressings.

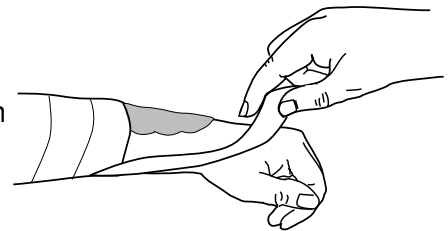
1. Preparing for wound care:

- Wash your hands.
- Clean the table or counter where you are changing your dressing with soap and water.
- Gather and set up your supplies. Supplies you may need include new dressing, scissors, plastic bags or wrap (for some dressing types), wash cloths, towels and soap.



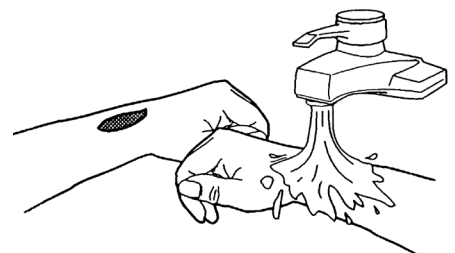
2. Removing old dressings (unless you have a dressing that is meant to stay on, such as the Mepilex Ag or long acting silver dressings):

- Cut off the old dressings with clean scissors or unwind the outer wrap.
- Remove the gauze. If the gauze is stuck, wet the gauze with tap water and remove it slowly. You do not want to cause bleeding and damage your healing skin.
- Throw out the old dressing in the trash.
- Wash your hands again.



3. Getting ready for the shower:

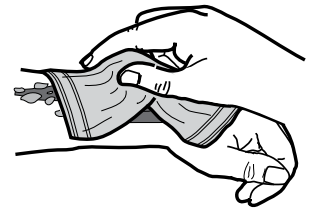
- If you have a long acting silver dressing, cover these with plastic bags or plastic wrap to protect it from getting wet in the shower. You can use bandage tape above and below the dressing to keep the plastic on.
- Start the shower and check the water temperature before getting into the water. The water temperature should feel comfortable to your unburned skin. If the water is too hot, it will injure your healing skin.



4. Taking a shower and washing:

- Wash your hair first.
- Next, wash all non-burned and healed skin with one washcloth and soap. Start at your head and work toward your toes. Clean your genitals (private parts) last.

- Use a second washcloth and soap to wash all wounds and unhealed donor sites. Be gentle so you do not further injure your healing skin. If you cause bleeding, you are washing too hard. A little bleeding is normal. Make sure creams are cleaned off the wounds.
- Rinse your hair and body well with tap water.
- Get out of the bathtub or shower.



5. Drying off:

- Use one towel for healed and unburned skin. Use the second towel for unhealed wounds and pat the wounds dry.
- Gently remove crusty scabs and loose pieces of skin with your towel. If the wound starts bleeding, stop.

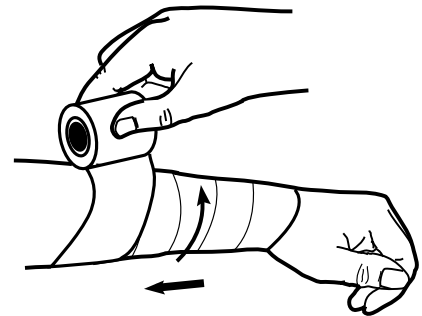
6. Checking for signs of infection:

- Redness or swelling around the wound
- Increased pain
- Wound smells bad
- Fever of 101 degrees F or higher

7. Apply your dressing as instructed by your health care provider.

8. If you were told to hold the dressing in place with a gauze wrap, follow these steps:

- Roll the gauze wrap loosely around the dressing.
- Overlap the gauze wrap about a ½ inch.
- Start wrapping at the far part of your body and wrap towards the center of your body. For example, start at your hand and wrap towards your shoulder, or start at your foot and wrap towards your hip.



9. Dress in clean clothes.

10. Clean up your work area:

- Put dressing supplies away.
- Clean your work area, bathtub, shower, or sink.
- Clean the scissors with alcohol.
- Wash your hands.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.