Queensland Paediatric Emergency Care

Skill Sheets

Burn Cleansing

Burns are a common presentation to the emergency department. It is important that they are adequately cleansed prior to dressing application to reduce the risk of infections and complications such as toxic shock syndrome. Prior to cleaning a burn, it is essential that 20 minutes of active cooling has been completed. Also ensure that the child will be able to tolerate the procedure though utilisation of appropriate pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods and distraction techniques.

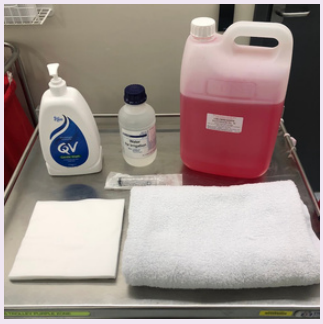
Alternative Cleansing Solutions

The availability of cleansing solutions may vary across institutions. See below for alternatives:

- Where QV Gentle Wash is unavailable, a soap-free cleanser is suitable
- Where Chlorhexidine Gluconate 5% is unavailable, Aqueous Chlorhexidine Irrigation Solution 0.1% is suitable

1 GATHER

Gather the equipment required for the procedure.



2 PREPARE

Perform hand hygiene and don gloves. An aseptic clinical handwash of 60 seconds is sufficient.

3

Put warm tap water in a clean bowl. Apply QV Gentle Wash to a damp cloth.

4 PROCEDURE

Cleanse the burn with the dampened cloth with QV Gentle Wash. Try to scrub/rub away blistered skin.

5

If blisters are not lifting, pinch top with fingers to deroof. Sterile scissors can be used with caution. Gently remove remaining blister.

6 PREPARE

Dilute 10mL of Chlorhexidine Gluconate 5% with 500mL water.

7 PROCEDURE

Cleanse the burn with sterile gauze soaked in the diluted chlorhexidine solution prepared in Step 6.

8

If burn is not ready to be dressed, allow to dry then cover with fresh cling wrap. Consider whether clinical photos are required.

Queensland Government

ALERT

Do not use needles to deroof or express blisters as this poses a significant risk of needlestick injury.

Referral & Follow Up

All burns in paediatric patients must be followed up by the relevant paediatric burns service. Ensure a referral is made prior to discharging the patient.

Please contact the Surgical/Burns Registrar via hospital switchboard for each referring health service along with photos and referral to the below email addresses:

- For sites inclusive of and north of Mackay, contact Townsville University Hospital at BurnsNQ@health.qld.gov.au
- For sites inclusive of and south of the Gold Coast, contact Gold Coast University Hospital at GCHChildburns@health.qld.gov.au and complete Blue Slip referral form
- For all other sites, contact Queensland Children's Hospital at CHQ_QCHburns@health.qld.gov.au

For further information:

Skill sheet: Burns Dressing - Acticoat™
Skill sheet: Burns Dressing - Mepilex® Ag
Skill Sheet: Burns Dressing - Hands
Video: Burn Cleansing
Video: Burns Dressing - Mepilex® Ag
Video: Burns Dressing - Acticoat™

References:

This Queensland Paediatric Skill Sheet was developed by the Emergency Care of Children working group (funded by the Queensland Emergency Department Strategic Advisory Panel) with the help of the following resources:

Children's Health Queensland. (2021, March 18). Burns - Mepilex™ Ag Dressing. Accessed 19 March 2025 from https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0030/714783/proc-06001.pdf

Children's Health Queensland. (2024, March 19). Management of a paediatric burn patient. Accessed 19 March 2025 from https:// www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/PDF/guidelines/gdl-paediatric-burns.pdf

Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. (2024, March 15). Paediatric Burns Referral and Management. Accessed 19 March 2025 from https://gchweb.sth.health.qld.gov.au/documents/GL1949

This Queensland Paediatric Emergency Skill Sheet was developed and revised by the Emergency Care of Children working group. Initial work was funded by the Queensland Emergency Department Strategic Advisory Panel.

Skill Sheet Disclaimer

The information contained in these Queensland Paediatric Emergency Care skill sheets is for information purposes only. It was developed to inform emergency nursing care, but can also be applied by other clinicians acting within their scope of practice. The information has been prepared using a multidisciplinary approach with reference to the best information and evidence available at the time of preparation. No representation, warranty or assurance is given that the information is entirely complete, current, or accurate in every respect. The skill sheets are not a substitute for clinical judgement, knowledge and expertise, or medical advice. Variation from the skill sheets, taking into account individual circumstances may be appropriate. This does not address all elements of standard practice and accepts that individual clinicians are responsible for the following:

- Providing care within the context of locally available resources, expertise, and scope of practice.
- Supporting consumer rights and informed decision making in partnership with healthcare practitioners including the right to decline intervention or ongoing management.
- Advising consumers of their choices in an environment that is culturally appropriate and which enables comfortable and confidential discussion. This includes the use of interpreter services where necessary.
- Ensuring informed consent is obtained prior to delivering care.
- Meeting all legislative requirements and professional standards.
- Applying standard precautions, and additional precautions as necessary, when delivering care.
- Documenting all care in accordance with mandatory and local requirements.

Children's Health Queensland disclaims, to the maximum extent permitted by law, all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs incurred for any reason associated with the use of this skill sheet, including the materials within or referred to throughout this document being in any way inaccurate, out of context, incomplete or unavailable.