



University Hospitals Bristol **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information Service
Bristol Royal Hospital for Children

Clinical Psychology Service

Paediatric burns - inpatient and outpatient care



Respecting everyone
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The Clinical Psychology Service in paediatric burns supports children and young people who have suffered burn injuries both as inpatients and outpatients. Support and advice is also provided to their families during this difficult time.

What does a clinical psychologist do?

Clinical psychologists are trained in child development, how children and young people think and learn, and how children and families cope with difficulties. The clinical psychologist will talk to you about any worries, fears or your experiences. They are able to work with you and your family to try and help you find ways of coping. They also work closely with nurseries, school, colleges and any other professionals involved with the family.

Working with a clinical psychologist

Burn injuries may be very distressing to children and young people and their families, and sometimes it can be difficult to cope either when on the ward or when at home. At these times it may be helpful to talk to someone like a clinical psychologist.

Children and young people may be seen because of:

- Experiencing distressing memories of the injury
- Difficulties in adjusting to the effects of the burn
- Worries about scarring and appearance
- Distressing or upsetting treatment
- Difficulties in coping with changes in appearance
- Worries about going back to school.

Similarly, parents and carers may have worries about:

- Their children's health, future development and school
- Relationships with other children
- Problems with the children's behaviour
- Feelings of guilt or responsibility about what has happened
- The impact of the injury on the relationships within the family.

What help may the clinical psychologist offer?

This will depend on the children and young people and their families. It may involve talking to the family as a whole or working with the children and young people or parents on their own as many times as is needed.

How can I be referred to see a clinical psychologist?

You can ask to be referred by any member of the burns team or any other health professional such as your GP. Please also ring us if you would like to discuss any concerns and if we are not in the office please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

What about confidentiality?

What you say will be confidential unless we are concerned for the safety of yourself or others. We will let others involved in your care know that you are working with us and we may at times share information to help us to provide the best service we can. We would try and discuss that with you first.

Common reactions

Reactions tend to resolve over time. However, if you are at all concerned please contact the Paediatric Burns Psychology Service.

Reactions can include:

- Unsettled sleep and disturbed sleep (e.g. nightmares)
- Bed wetting
- Children believe the injury happened because they were naughty
- Behavioural changes such as irritability and demanding attention or special 'treats'
- Being clingy and fear of being alone
- Brothers and sisters being jealous of the attention given to the injured child
- Children act younger than their age
- Fear of the heat source which caused the injury (e.g. bath, candles, oven)
- Nervous of people in uniform (e.g. nurses)
- Parents become overprotective and anxious
- Family tensions may increase.

Finally, remember that most parents, or whoever was there at the time of the injury, feel guilty. It is very difficult to watch children all the time, especially if they are of pre-school age and experimenting with climbing, running and reaching for objects.

Instead of focusing on what has happened try to concentrate on the present and on how to support your child and other family members who may have been affected, while making sure you are looking after yourself.

It is important to recognise that all those who witnessed the accident may be in need of support. Finally, it is advisable to talk to visitors particularly younger children about what to expect before visiting the ward. The staff including the paediatric burns psychologist can help you with this if you have any concerns.

If you are struggling it is important for you to seek support from family and friends and to contact the paediatric burns psychologist who will be happy to speak to you in confidence.

It is generally recommended to encourage your child to talk about what happened over and over again. If they cannot remember what happened tell them yourself in a way which is age appropriate. This helps the child to make sense of it all and prevents children making up their own versions of events. Reassuring your child, trying to treat them as you did before the injury and gently increasing their exposure to things they may be frightened of since the accident is recommended.

NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities.

Visit www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution

Useful websites

Children's Burns Trust
www.cbtrust.org.uk

How to contact us:

The Paediatric Burns Outreach Team	0117 342 7910
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(this is also the number for the burns Occupational Therapy/
Scar Management Service)

Main reception	0117 342 7900
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Paediatric Burns Outpatients	0117 342 7920
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Notes/queries

Please note that if for any reason you would value a second opinion concerning your diagnosis or treatment, you are entirely within your rights to request this.

The first step would usually be to discuss this with the doctor or other lead clinician who is responsible for your care.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact **Smokefree Bristol** on **0117 922 2255**.

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While your child is under our care, you may be approached about them taking part in research. To find out more please visit: **www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation** or call the research and innovation team on **0117 342 0233**.

For access to other patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/

Hospital Switchboard: 0117 923 0000

Minicom: 0117 934 9869

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk



For an Interpreter or Signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in Large Print, Braille, Audio, or Email, please call the Patient Information Service: **0117 342 3728 / 3725**

