



Hand with burn dressing fitted for splint.

Key Points to Remember:

- Early and consistent care is vital in stopping burn scar contractures.
- Use scar care techniques like massage, compression garments and silicone sheets.
- Do routine hand exercises as taught by the OT/PT team to keep or improve mobility.
- Seek professional medical help if you have pain, swelling or loss of function in your hand.
- Call our burn clinic 315-464-1800 if you have questions. We want to be a part of your burn healing success!



Contact Us

Phone: 315-464-1800

Web: www.upstate.edu/burncenter

The purpose of this worksheet is to provide education on hand burn scar contractures-how they form, how to stop them, and how to care for them. This worksheet is useful for patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals working with burn survivors.

Resources:

American Burn Association

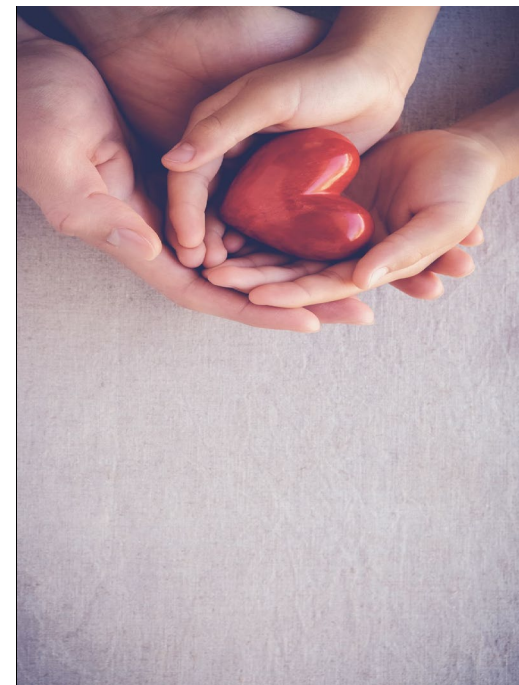
www.ameriburn.org

National Institute of Burns

www.nib.org



Healing takes time, but with each step forward, you're becoming even stronger. You are powerful and have shown the world just how brave you are. Stronger with every step.



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Risk Factors for Burn Scar Contractures

Certain factors increase the likelihood of developing contracture after a hand burn:

- **Burn Location:** burns on areas like the palms, knuckles and finger are more likely to result in contractures.
- **Age:** children and older adults may be at higher risk due to the flexibility of skin and connective tissues
- **Burn depth:** Deeper burns (third degree) can make a more significant scar.
- **Rehabilitation:** Lack of physical/occupational therapy and stretching during recovery can result in contractures forming.

Image of hand contracture



Prevention Strategies

Preventing contractures is an important part of burn recovery. Here are some ways to lower the risk of hand burns scar contractures:

Early intervention:

- Follow your healthcare provider's advice for wound care and rehabilitation.
- Prevent excessive pressure or tightness on healing wounds by avoiding overtightening bandages or clothing which limit movement.

Scar Management:

- Compression garments can help to reduce scar tissue build-up and promote proper healing.
- Massage therapy can improve blood circulation and soften scar tissue.
- Silicone gel sheets can help reduce scarring and prevent contractures.

Physical/Occupational Therapy:

- Regular hand and finger stretches can prevent stiffness.
- Your burn care team may recommend splints to help keep your hand in the best position for healing.



Illustrated image of hand contracture

Understanding Hand Burn Scar Contracture.

A **burn scar contracture** occurs when a burn injury leads to abnormal healing of the skin and tissues, causing the skin to shrink and tighten. This can limit movement, especially in the hand, and may affect daily activities.

What causes a burn scar contracture?

Severity of burn injury: deeper burns (second and third degree) can cause more severe scarring.

Immobilization: limited movement of the injured area during healing can result in tight scars.

Infection: can slow healing and worsen scarring.

Would care: Inadequate treatment of the burn area can lead to more prominent scarring.