

# Burns Dressing - Hands

Burns are a common presentation to the emergency department. It is important that the correct dressings are utilised when managing a burn. All burns must have had 20 minutes of active cooling. See the [Burn Cleansing Skill Sheet](#) for cleansing instructions post cooling. Ensure that the appropriate comfort measures are planned for and utilised prior to commencing any burns dressing. This might include pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions. Remember to check for allergies prior to commencement. Mepilex® Ag or Acticoat™ dressing regimes may be used for hands.

Refer to the treating team's care plan for guidance as to which dressing regime is most appropriate. This skill sheet is based on the recommendation of the Queensland Children's Hospital Burns Service. There may be slight variations in practice, depending on factors that influence burns care at each site. Please refer to your local tertiary burns service for more information. For sites Mackay and north this will be Townsville University Hospital. For the Gold Coast, this will be Gold Coast University Hospital.

## Dressing Hands with Acticoat™

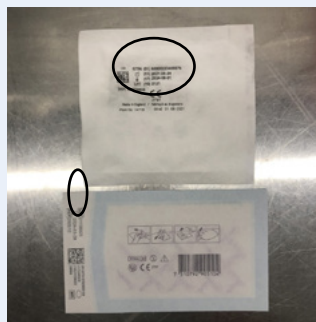
### 1 GATHER EQUIPMENT

Ensure you have the correct dressing for the duration required.



### 2 PREPARE

Ensure that the Acticoat™ dressing packet is intact and not expired.



### 3

Perform hand hygiene and don gloves.



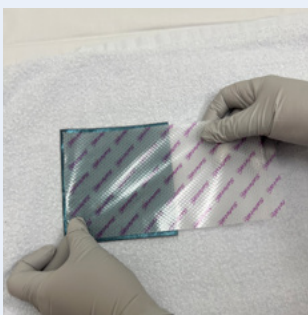
### 4

Wet the Acticoat™ with water for irrigation.



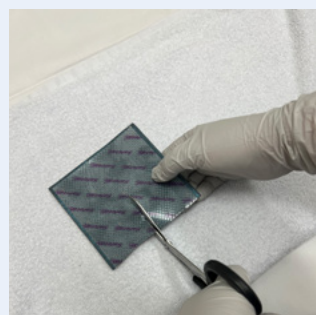
### 5

Remove the plastic from one side of the Mepitel® and place on the blue side of the Acticoat™.



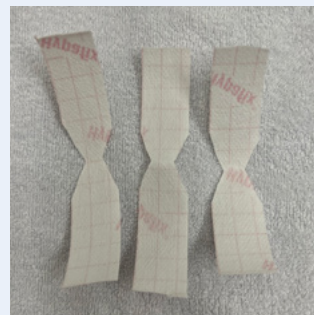
### 6

Cut the Acticoat™ and Mepitel® to cover the burn.



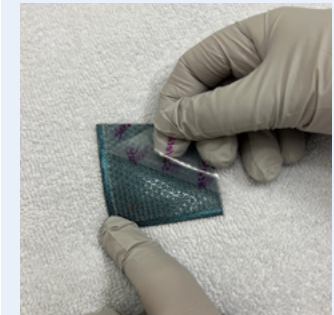
### 7

Cut non-woven adhesive tape to size.



### 8

Remove the remaining plastic from the Mepitel®.



9

PROCEDURE

Place Mepitel® and Acticoat™ dressing on the burn, with the Mepitel™ in direct contact with the burn. Remember: “BLUE to BURN”.



10

Fingers: Ensure the dressing is wrapped around the finger.



11

Secure well with non-woven adhesive tape. Ensure the finger is not taped too tightly as to not restrict circulation.



12

Use the non-woven tape to secure the dressing lengthways along the finger. Do this both anteriorly and posteriorly.



13

Use the non-woven tape to secure the adhesive tape around the base and tips of the fingers.



14

Ensure that all the Acticoat™ is covered by the non-woven adhesive tape. Ensure that no Acticoat™ is left visible.



15

Palms: After applying Mepitel® and Acticoat™ with non-woven adhesive tape, add a Melolite™ dressing.



16

Apply non-woven adhesive tape through the web spaces to secure dressing.



17

Ensure all dressings are covered with non-adhesive woven tape. Secure base of dressing at the wrist.



18

Cover with tubular bandage.



Tips

- If there are multiple areas of burn close together that require dressing, you may cover the entire area with the Acticoat™. The dressing will not harm the uninjured skin.
- Acticoat™ dressings should remain moist.
- Irrigation ports are not required for hand dressings, as the hand is a naturally moist environment.





## Dressing Hands with Mepilex Ag™

### 1 GATHER EQUIPMENT

Ensure you have the correct dressing for the duration required.



### 2 PREPARE

Ensure that the Mepilex® Ag™ dressing packet is intact and not expired.



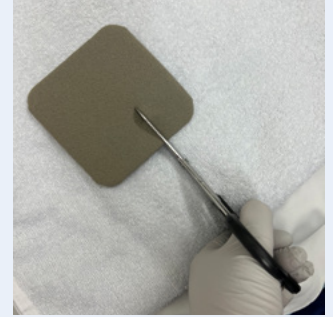
### 3

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



### 4

Cut Mepilex® Ag pieces to the correct sizes to cover the burned area of skin.



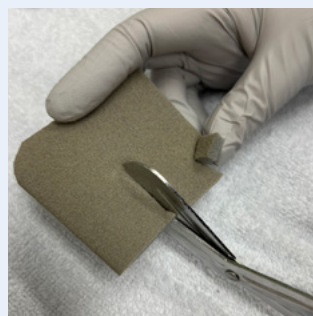
### 5

Cut the required number of non-woven adhesive tapes to secure the Mepilex® Ag.



### 6

Fingers: Cut along one edge of the finger dressings. This allows the dressing to easily conform to the digit.



### 7

### PROCEDURE

Place dressing on burn sticky-side down. Secure with non-woven adhesive tape.



### 8

Also secure the dressing lengthways (both posteriorly and anteriorly) with the same non-woven adhesive tape.



### 9

Palm: Place correct to size Mepilex® Ag over palm, sticky-side down.



### 10

Secure dressing with non-woven adhesive tapes.



### 11

Ensure that Mepilex® Ag is fully covered due to the choking risk if parts of dressing is bitten off by child.



### 12

Cover completed dressing with tubular bandage to further secure and protect.



## Tips

- If there are multiple areas of burn close together that require dressing, you may cover the entire area with the Mepilex® Ag. The dressing will not harm the uninjured skin.
- Mepilex® Ag may not be a suitable dressing for hands for patients under 2 years of age, due to the thickness of the dressing.



### ALERT

Manufacturer instructions for Mepilex® Ag do not specify to cover dressing fully, however the potential choking hazard is considered to place the child at risk.

## Education

- Ensure that carer goes home with the appropriate dressing fact sheet. [Mepilex® Ag](#) (QH only) and [Acticoat™](#) (QH only) fact sheets are available. The relevant fact sheet should be explained prior to discharge.
- Key points:
  - Dressing to remain dry.
  - Child is not to go near sand, dirt or water.
  - Do not wet during bathing.
  - Signs of toxic shock syndrome. Any temperatures, rash, diarrhoea, vomiting, decreased oral intake should prompt a return to hospital for review.

## Documentation

Ensure that adequate documentation is completed including:

- Appearance of wound
- Effectiveness of analgesia and diversion therapy
- Location of wound
- Type of dressing

## 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 switch for each referring health service along with photos and referral to below email address.

- **For sites including and north of Mackay contact Townsville University Hospital:**  
**[BurnsNQ@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:BurnsNQ@health.qld.gov.au)**
- **For sites including and south of the Gold Coast contact Gold Coast University Hospital:**  
**[email GCHChildburns@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:email GCHChildburns@health.qld.gov.au) and complete Blue Slip referral**
- **For all other sites contact Queensland Children's Hospital:**  
**[burns-opd@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:burns-opd@health.qld.gov.au)**



## For further information:

[Skill Sheet: Burn Cleaning](#)

[Skill Sheet: Burns Dressing - Acticoat™](#)

[Skill Sheet: Burns Dressing - Mepilex® Ag](#)

## References:

This Queensland Paediatric Emergency 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 21 February, 2022 from [https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0029/706565/proc\\_06001](https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/706565/proc_06001).

Children's Health Queensland. (2021, April 6). Management of a paediatric burn patient. Accessed 21 February, 2022 from <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/PDF/guidelines/gdl-paediatric-burns.pdf>

Children's Health Queensland. (2021, March 18). Nursing Standard: Burns - Acticoat™ Dressing. Accessed 21 February 2022 from [https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0026/722933/ns\\_06811.pdf](https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/722933/ns_06811.pdf)

Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. (August, 2020). Paediatric Burns Referral and Management. Retrieved June 14, 2022 from <https://gchweb.sth.health.qld.gov.au/documents/GL1949>

Molnlycke Health Care AB. (2021). Mepilex® Ag. Accessed 21 February, 2022 from <https://www.molnlycke.com.au/products-solutions/mepilex-ag/>

Molnlycke Health Care AB. (2021). Mepitel®. Accessed 21 February, 2022 from <https://www.molnlycke.com.au/products-solutions/mepitel/>

Smith + Nephew. (n.d). Acticoat 0. Accessed 21 February, 2022 from <https://www.smith-nephew.com/professional/products/advanced-wound-management/acticoat/acticoat/>

Smith + Nephew. (n.d). Acticoat 70. Accessed 21 February, 2022 from <https://www.smith-nephew.com/australia/healthcare/products/product-types/antimicrobial-dressings/silver-dressings/acticoat--product-range/acticoat--71/>

Smith + Nephew. (n.d). Melolite\*. Accessed 21 February 2022 from <https://www.smith-nephew.com/australia/healthcare/>

## Skill Sheet Legal 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.

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