

Pressure Garment Information for Burn Patients

Pressure garments are worn after a burn to control scarring, to help the scar mature, and to improve the look of your injured skin. This is done by putting direct pressure on the skin; thus, the garments need to fit tightly in order to work well. Burn scars mature in 9 months to 3 years. You will need to wear these garments for at least 6 months and perhaps as long as 2 – 3 years. Your doctor will decide when you can stop wearing the garments.

Measuring and Fitting

Custom pressure garments are made to fit each person. This requires exact measuring of the body parts to be covered. Many colors and options exist to help make wearing them more pleasant. You would only need to be measured again for a later order if you have a change in height or weight, or when you have had a large decrease in swelling of arms or legs. The fitter should be told if this is needed. The garment will fit snugly. A garment that is too loose will have wrinkles and will be of little benefit to you. A garment that fits too tightly will cause numbness, tingling, and sometimes pain. If you have any of these symptoms, remove the garment and call your fitter. Always bring the garments with you to your clinic visits so that we can check their fit.

Wear and Care

Garments need to be worn 7 days a week, 23 – 24 hours daily. They are removed for bathing and if they interfere with therapy. During the first week or two of wearing the pressure garment, it is common to have blisters and skin breakdown over areas of new skin. If this occurs, call your fitter, stop wearing the garments for 2 – 3 days until the open areas heal, and then resume wearing them.

Garments should be washed every day by hand in warm water and mild soap (Ivory®, Dove®, Dial®) and allowed to drip dry. It is a good idea to have two complete sets of garments so that a clean set is always ready to wear and provide constant pressure on the burn scars. Garments often last 2 – 3 months before stretching out. They are of no help if they are stretched out and do not fit snugly. Order new garments 2 – 3 weeks in advance to have good fitting garments at all times. Call us at **(608) 264-8040** to reorder. If you receive garments in the mail that do not fit or are defective, they can be returned and replaced. Most companies will do this free if told of the problem within 7 – 10 days.

It is up to you!

If you wear the garments as prescribed, you should have softer, smoother scars. The garments will not make your skin normal, but they will help you achieve the best outcome.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 8/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4610.