

Standards for the Assessment & Management of Pain & Itch in Burns Patients

This document provides peer-agreed standards for the assessment and management of pain and itch in burns patients within the South West Burn Care Network. These have been aligned to the [National Standards for the Provision and Outcomes in Adult and Paediatric Burn Care 2018](#) as detailed:

E.03 - Guidelines for referring services
E.03.K: Burn Care Network agreed guidelines for referring services should be in use for Pain and Itch management
E.05 - Clinical Guidelines
E.05.I: Agreed clinical guidelines are in place covering Pain and Itch management
G.05 - Network immediate care guidelines
G.05.J: The Burn Care Network has agreed and disseminated guidelines on immediate care of patients for use by pre hospital care providers, ambulance, emergency department personnel and GPs on Pain and Itch management

These standards are based on best evidence and practice, ensuring equality of access.

Every patient will be assessed and treated for Pain and Itch from admission to discharge from Burn Services.

These standards recognise that each of the services in the South West Burn Care Network has differences in design of assessment charts and analgesic regimens. However, these individual service differences will not affect the principal of every patient having equal access to the same standard of pain and itch assessment and management.

These standards will be able to be maintained with changing developments locally and nationally with observations charts and treatments eg new national "NEWS" observation and escalation chart.

Below are the South West Burn Care Network Services Pain and Itch guidelines and protocols.

Standards for the Assessment and Management of Pain and Itch in Burn Injured Patients

- All patients with a burn injury, whatever the size or location, will be assessed and treated for pain and itch.
- Pain management for the burn patient will be the responsibility of the whole of the Multidisciplinary team (MDT).
- Pain assessment and management to be commenced from burn injury at the scene through to discharge from the burn service including all transfers, inpatient and outpatient episodes of care.
- All burn patients and burn teams will have access to a specialist age-appropriate pain management service.
- Burn pain treatment guidelines (from individual burn care services) will be available to all teams involved in burn care: Emergency services, Emergency Department (ED), Burn teams, GPs, Outreach teams and District Nurses.
- Assessment of pain and itch will be undertaken with all other physiological observations during inpatient admission.
- All Paediatric burn patients will have age-appropriate pain assessments.
- Parents/family members and carers will be involved in pain assessment where appropriate.
- Analgesia will be prescribed for background pain, breakthrough pain, interventional and procedural pain.
- Anxiety will be assessed in relation to pain and treated with support of psychologists and anxiolytics prescribed if required.
- A balanced range of analgesia to be prescribed to ensure efficacy and reduction of side effects dependant on burn size and depth. Anaesthetists should be involved in pain reviews daily.
- Aperients to be prescribed if opiate analgesia in use. This should be reviewed daily.
- The use of General Anaesthesia should be considered for interventions when pain cannot be managed adequately.
- At all dressing changes there should be an agreed cut off for converting from ward procedure to theatres.
- The Play Specialist team to be involved in pain and itch management for Paediatric patients.
- Distraction therapy must be available for all patients undergoing burn procedures/ interventions
- The assessment and treatment of itch must be included alongside that of pain.
- An itch assessment tool will be included on the patients observation chart.
- Pharmacological treatments for itch will be prescribed as required.
- Management of itch as the burn wound heals will include consideration of topical treatments, pressure garments and laser therapy.
- All referring emergency services will document pain and analgesia administration.
- All transfer documentation will include information on pain and itch management.
- All discharge documentation will include information on pain and itch management.
- Analgesia will be given for any outpatient procedures as required.
- Four-hour admissions or day case admissions should be considered for patients who require any strong analgesia or sedation at outpatient dressing.
- Pain and itch will be reviewed at every outpatient visit until discharge from service.
- Patients will have equal access to chronic pain services as part of ongoing management in hospital and when discharged from burn service.
- Patients will have equal access to laser services and gabapentin for itch management.
- Burn patients will have equal access for advice and support regarding pain and itch.