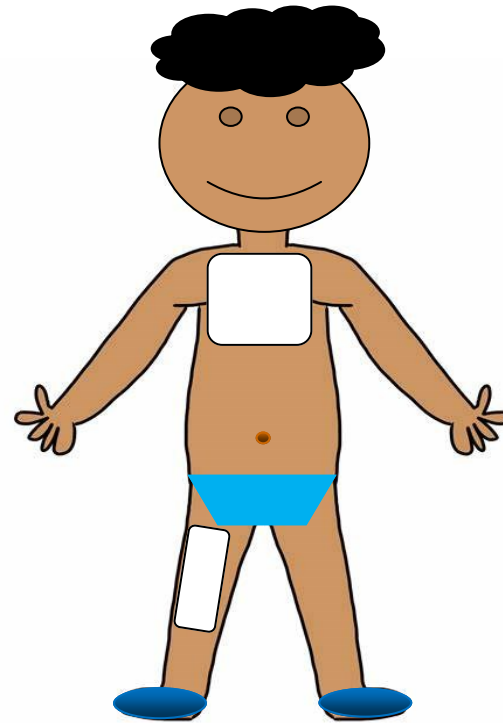


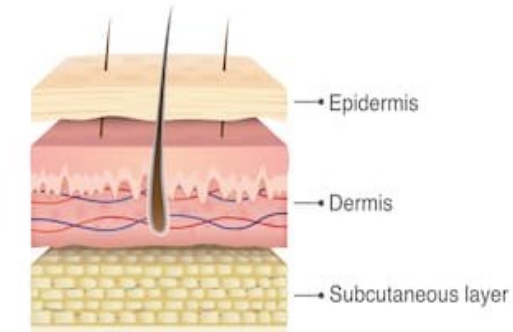
Sam had a mesh skin graft operation



Everybody has skin, but not everyone knows that our skin has three layers!

Every person has a top layer of skin that is a different skin colour tone to anyone else. The top layer of skin that we can see and touch is the skin's outer surface layer.

This **first layer** of skin is called the **Epidermis**.



The second layer of skin is hidden underneath the surface layer.

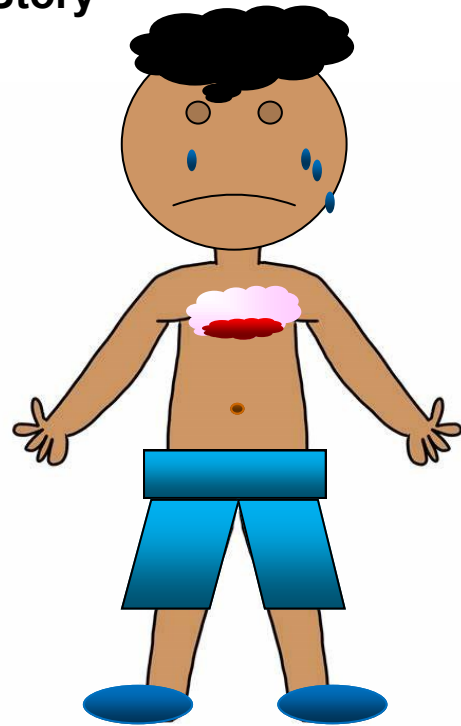
This layer is always a pale pink and white colour, even if you have dark skin on the surface.

This **second layer** is called the **Dermis**.

The **third layer** is always a yellow colour and covers muscles and bones.

This is called **Subcutaneous Fat** or **Hypodermis**.

Sam's Story



This is a story about Sam. Sam accidentally spilt hot water onto his chest.

This caused a scald burn to the top two layers of his skin.

Sam's mum poured cool running water over his burn for 20 minutes whilst calling 999 for an ambulance.

Sam and his mum were taken to the Children's Burns Ward at Broomfield Hospital in Essex.



Sam was surprised to see that the burnt area on his skin was a different colour from the rest of his body.

This is because the second layer of skin is always red, pink or white.

This means even if our skin is a different colour on the outside, on the inside everyone is the same.

CHILDREN'S BURNS WARD

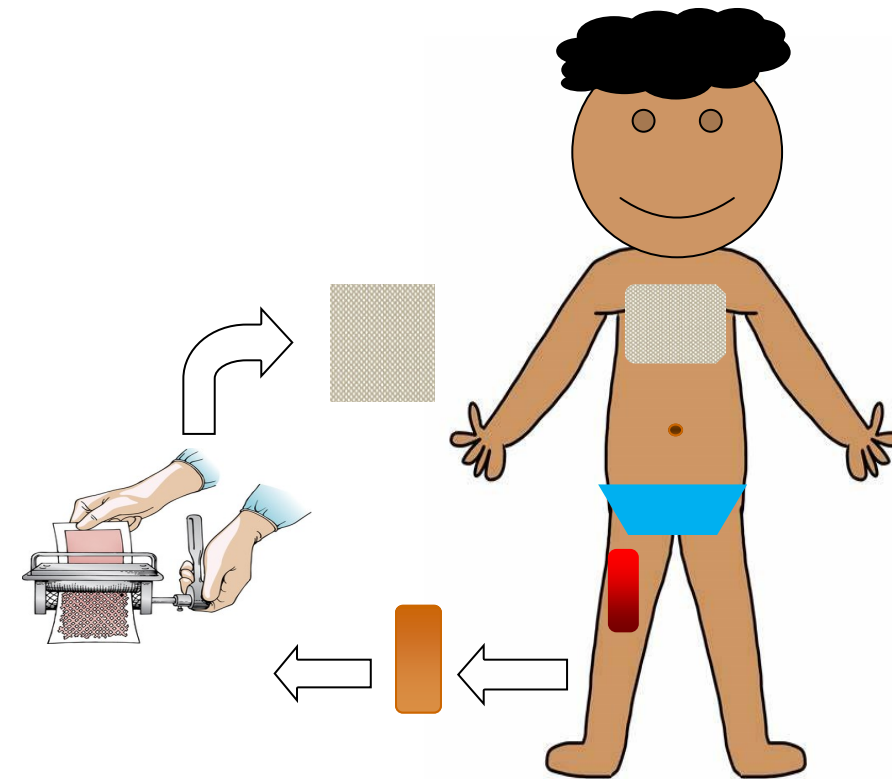


To help Sam's skin get better he stayed in hospital for a mesh skin graft operation.

The doctors gave Sam a special medicine so he would quickly fall sleep for the operation.

The medicine made sure that Sam stayed asleep for the whole operation.

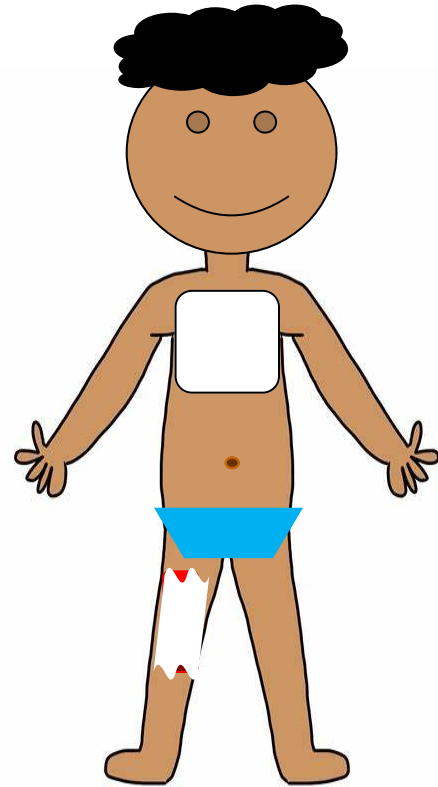
When Sam woke up, the operation was finished he said "I had a really quick sleep and I didn't even feel anything"



During Sam's operation the doctor took a very thin patch of healthy skin from Sam's leg. This is called 'donor' skin.

This 'donor' patch of skin was put through a special machine to make tiny mesh patterned holes.

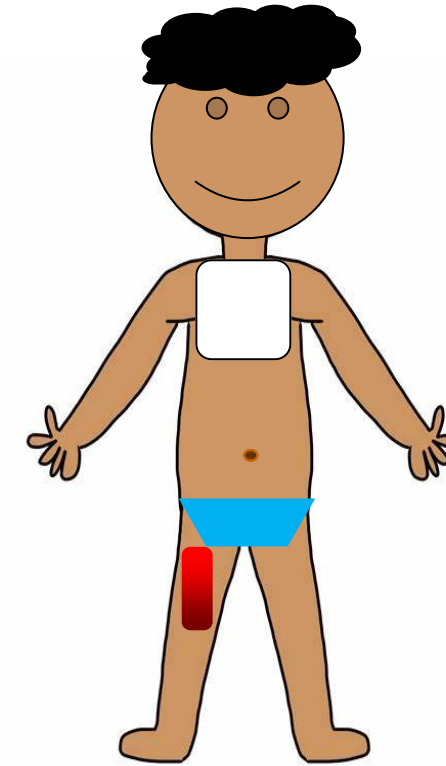
This helped the skin stretch to cover the burn on Sam's chest and help it heal, just like a special plaster!



The doctor finished the operation by putting a bandage on Sam's chest to cover his burn and mesh skin graft. This bandage had to stay on for two days.

After two days the nurse took off the bandage and gently washed away any germs.

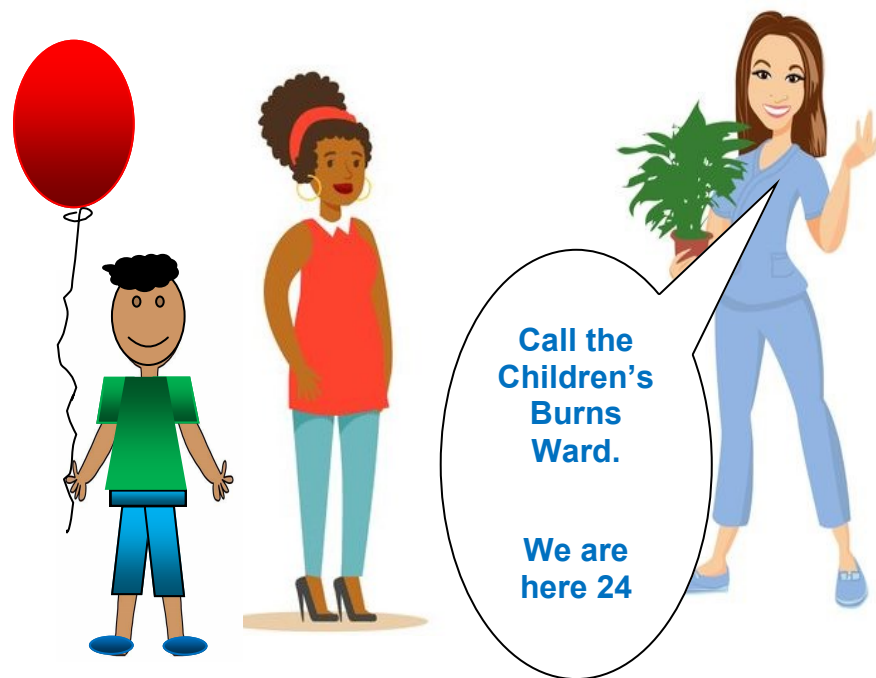
The nurse then put a new bandage on Sam's chest to help the burn and mesh skin graft to heal.



Sam also noticed he had another bandage on his leg.

This was where the piece of healthy donor skin was taken from. The nurses called this Sam's 'donor site'.

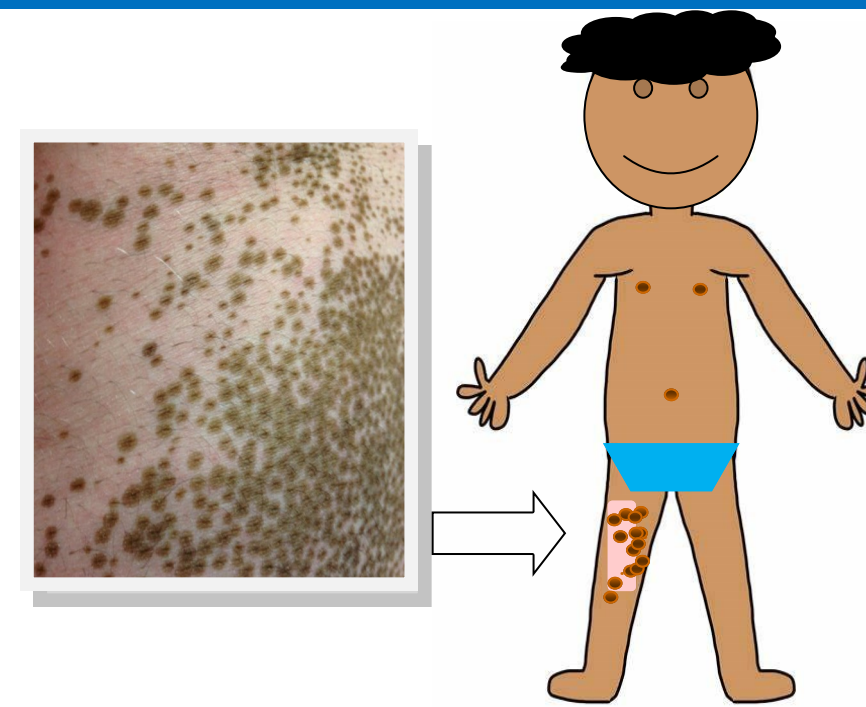
Sam was able to go home but was asked to come back in 10 to 14 days for the nurse to take off the bandage and gently wash away any germs to help the donor site to heal.



When it was time for Sam to go home the nurse reassured his mum that she could telephone the Burns team if she had any questions or worries about Sam's skin graft or donor site.

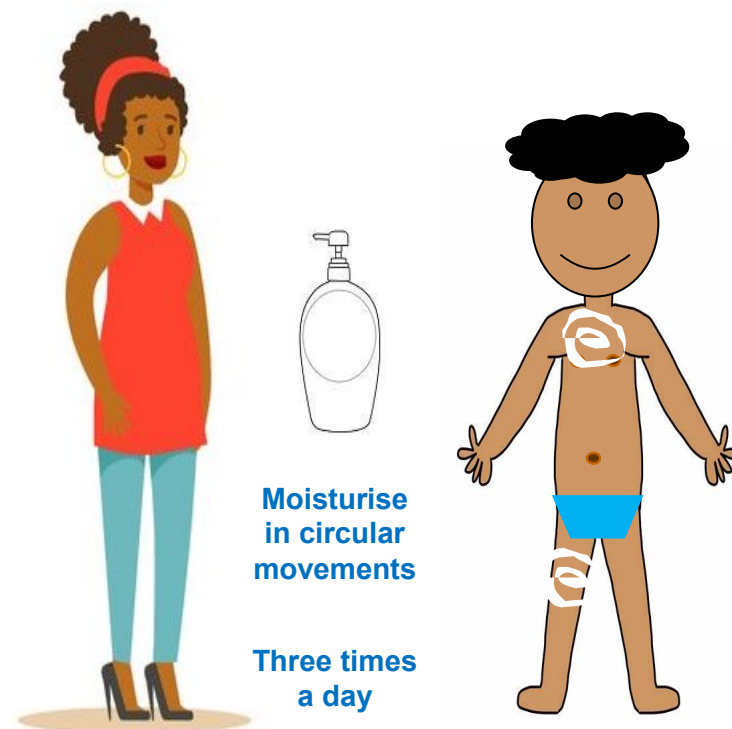
Nurses on the Children's Burns Ward are available 24 hours a day to give advice.

Children's Burns Ward: 01245 516973 (24 hours)
Burns Outpatient Department: 01245 516008
Burns Therapists: 01245 516220



When the skin on Sam's 'donor site' healed it still looked different to his brown skin, because it was pink. Sam was not surprised about this, because the doctor had already told him new skin always grows back pink at first.

After a short time Sam began to notice tiny brown dots on his donor site. This was his skin pigment called melanin. This changed the colour of Sam's top layer of skin from pink to brown, just like the rest of his body. Sam understood that the colour might not ever be exactly the same as it was before.



The nurses told Sam's mum to massage moisturiser cream into Sam's skin at least 3 times a day to stop it becoming dry and itchy.

Sam learnt that moisturising is also important to help his skin heal flat and to help any creases or crinkly marks.

These marks are called scars.



Even when Sam's skin had healed he still had to be careful in the summer because the sun's rays can be harmful to new skin.

Sam always wore factor 50+ sun cream on his chest and leg, even under his clothes! He did this for two years to keep his skin safe in the sun.

This booklet has been developed by Nicola Jessup (Play Specialist) and Dr Kate Davenport (Clinical Psychologist) to help children and families understand a **mesh skin graft** procedure.

Further Contacts:

If you have any questions about the content of this leaflet and/or your treatment please contact the services below:

Children's Burns Ward: 01245 516973 (24 hours)

Burns Outpatient Department: 01245 516008

Burns Therapists: 01245 516220



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Document History

Department: Children's Burns Ward

Published/Review Date: 20/11/2019 to 19/11/2022

File name: Skin Graft Story Book

Version/ref no: 1.0/MEHT190048