

Shriners Children's: A History of Innovation and Excellence in Burn Care



Shriners Children's™ is noted worldwide as a leader in pediatric burn care. Since opening our first pediatric burns hospitals in the 1960s, our healthcare system has been at the forefront of innovative programs and treatment techniques that have both dramatically improved the survival rate for children with severe burns and enhanced their quality of life. Here is a brief look at our work over the decades:

1960s

The governing body of the Shriners organization passed a resolution at the Imperial Session in 1962 to build and operate hospitals specializing in pediatric burn care. The first hospital opened in 1962 in Galveston, Texas, followed by additional specialized hospitals in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Boston, Massachusetts, two years later.

1970s

Tremendous improvements in survival rates were made, particularly because of innovative research in excision, grafting and intravenous feeding. In addition, pressure garments that helped lessen scarring were developed at the Galveston hospital. Our Cincinnati hospital pioneered skin banking – a precursor to future methods of tissue, bone and skin procurement. In addition, Shriners Children's worked with the United States Fire Administration and Consumer Product Safety Commission to identify burn prevention programs for schools and fire departments. And, our Boston hospital began the first school re-entry program.

1980s

Outpatient clinics were added to provide continued care for patients after they have been discharged from the hospital. Researchers at Shriners Children's discovered that early surgical excision of injured tissue and grafting reduces infections, shortens hospital stays and improves cosmetic outcomes for patients. Shriners Children's became leaders in burn prevention, collaborating with the American Burn Association to promote Burn Awareness Week, a national education campaign created to raise public awareness and reduce the number of burn injuries in children.

1990s

Treatments became available for non-burn conditions such as port wine stains, congenital ear deformities and other complex wound and skin conditions. In addition, new programs were set up to help burn patients with psychological and social issues, including transitioning back to school and community. In 1996, Shriners Children's Boston collaborated with the American Burn Association to develop an outcome instrument to measure functional outcomes in pediatric burn survivors. And, in 1997, Shriners Children's Northern California opened in Sacramento and soon became the busiest pediatric burn center in the Western United States.

2000s

Our hospitals in Boston and Cincinnati received the Press Ganey Summit Award for extraordinary patient satisfaction. All four of the hospitals were recognized as leaders in the field of burn care, with each hospital maintaining a leadership position with the American Burn Association. Shriners Children's Boston, through microfluidics research, developed a microchip device that aids therapeutic strategies for burn patients.

2010s

In 2011, Shriners Children's Northern California hosted its first Regional Burn Conference, a continuing education program for physicians, nurses, first responders, therapists and other healthcare professionals. In 2014, David Herndon, M.D., chief of staff in our Texas hospital, was awarded the Medallion for Scientific Achievement by the American Surgical Association and the Tanner-Vanderput-Boswick Burn Prize from the International Society for Burn Injuries. In 2015, John Burke, M.D., former chief of staff at our Boston hospital, was inducted into the Inventors Hall of Fame posthumously for his work with the development of artificial skin. Shriners Children's achieved excellent results using CO2 fractional laser technology to increase function and improve the appearance of burn scars.

2020s

In 2021, our Cincinnati hospital moved to Dayton, Ohio. Shriners Children's burns hospitals have continued to offer innovative plastic, laser and reconstructive treatments for patients, including care for complex craniofacial conditions. Our burn care teams have expanded their outreach to countries where burn injuries are more prevalent; international patients are also being treated at our facilities. Shriners Children's researchers continue to pioneer the latest advancements in burn care and conduct outcomes research to improve care for burn survivors.

Shriners Children's looks forward to continuing its legacy of leadership in pediatric burn care.



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