



# RILEY BURN CENTER

Since 1971, the Riley Burn Center has been caring for the special needs of pediatric burn patients. Today, the Riley Burn Center is recognized as Indiana's only American Burn Association (ABA) verified burn center dedicated to serving children.



**Riley Children's Health**  
Indiana University Health

To refer a patient to the outpatient burn clinic, call **317.944.9090**.

To transfer a patient, call **877.247.1177**  
(IU Health 24/7 Transfer Center).

## ABOUT THE RILEY BURN CENTER

The Riley Burn Center is Indiana's only ABA-verified pediatric burn program dedicated to serving children.



Because children are still growing and developing, their treatment requires a different approach than adults. From managing stress to calculating medication to supporting children through play and maintaining communication with their schools, every aspect of our care is personalized to the needs of children. This specialized approach is standard practice in pediatric burn centers, ensuring care is both seamless and developmentally appropriate.

The Burn Center at Riley Children's Health offers comprehensive care led by burn surgeons who are fellowship trained to provide the highest level of care for children with acute burn injuries or chronic conditions from previous burns. They also perform cosmetic plastic surgery, reshaping affected facial and body features to help improve appearance and self-image.

Expert pediatric care requires a team of dedicated professionals focused on the best outcome for each child and their family. At Riley Children's, our burn surgeons are complemented by a multidisciplinary team of pediatric experts that understand the unique needs of children.

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**"Pediatric burns are more than just burns on smaller bodies. Our specialty-trained multidisciplinary team at Riley Children's knows how to care for physical, psychological and social aspects of pediatric patients as well as their families and caregivers long after their initial injuries are healed."**

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– Leigh J. Spera, MD  
Medical Director, Riley Burn Center



### MEET THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

**Leigh J. Spera, MD**, is a triple board-certified surgeon in general surgery, surgical critical care, and plastic surgery with specialty training in the acute care of the injured burn patient and burn reconstruction.

After completing her general surgery and plastic surgery training at Indiana University in 2020, Dr. Spera pursued a surgical critical care and burn fellowship at the University of Southern California.

Dr. Spera returned to Indiana University to join the Division of Plastic Surgery in 2021. She now serves as the medical director for the Riley Burn Center and the Richard M. Fairbanks Burn Center at Eskenazi Health for adults.

Since 1971, the Riley Burn Center has been caring for the special needs of pediatric burn patients. The inpatient burn unit has 10 beds that can meet the needs of children from intensive care through discharge, without the need to go to another unit.

The adjacent outpatient burn clinic provides follow-up clinical and rehabilitative care, and it remains close to the inpatient unit for ongoing support.

If further inpatient rehabilitation is needed, Riley Children's also offers Indiana's only pediatric inpatient rehabilitation unit that is verified by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). This allows pediatric burn survivors to seamlessly transition from inpatient burn to inpatient rehabilitation within the same facility.



## Burn referral criteria<sup>1</sup>

Specialized pediatric burn care should be obtained for burns to the face, hands, genitals, buttocks, and feet, or when the burn is over a joint (so mobility and scarring do not become an issue long-term). Children with electrical burns, or burns involving smoke from a fire (such as those in house fires), should be evaluated at a pediatric burn center. Additionally, children's airways differ from adults and require management by specialists who are experienced in performing pediatric burn procedures.

### Criteria for immediate consultation/ consideration for transfer to a burn center:

- Full thickness burns or potentially deep burns of any size
- Partial thickness burns greater than or equal to 10% total burn surface area (TBSA)
- Deep partial burns that involve the face, hands, genitalia, feet, perineum, or over joints
- Suspected smoke inhalation injuries
- Patients with burns and other medical conditions that could complicate medical management or prolong recovery
- Burns and other concomitant traumatic injuries
- Poorly controlled pain
- Children may benefit from burn center referral due to pain, dressing change needs, rehabilitation, patient/caregiver needs, or non-accidental trauma
- All chemical related burns
- Electrical injuries

<sup>1</sup>Guidelines for Burn Patient Referral. American Burn Association (2022) available at [ameriburn.org/burnreferral](http://ameriburn.org/burnreferral)



## Acute inpatient burn care

Riley Children's has a dedicated team of nurses who deliver leading-edge burn care 24/7. With specialized training in critical care, Riley nurses provide burn care support through airway management, fluid resuscitation, pain control, nutritional support, and comprehensive wound care. During all phases of acute care, their goal is to achieve wound closure as quickly and safely as possible, while at the same time addressing mobility and cosmesis.

## Burn surgery

The Riley Burn Center offers surgical care during both the acute phase of burn injury, as well as laser procedures and reconstruction, if needed in the future.

If further inpatient rehabilitation is needed, Riley Hospital also has a CARF-accredited pediatric unit in the same facility.

For outpatient management, the Riley Burn Center includes an adjacent outpatient burn clinic. The outpatient burn clinic provides follow-up clinical and rehabilitative care and remains close to the inpatient unit for coordinated care and ongoing support.

## Outpatient care

After discharge, patients are scheduled for follow-up care at our outpatient burn clinic, conveniently located next to the inpatient burn unit. The outpatient burn clinic is also available for patients referred from other emergency departments, doctor's offices, and urgent visit centers. Burn specialists, physical and occupational therapists, a burn psychologist, and social workers provide evaluation. Our burn team monitors wound healing, manages scars, and addresses issues that may impact return to prior activities and optimal patient outcomes.

### Outpatient burn services include:

- Wound care and dressing changes
- Medication management
- Scar management
- Occupational and physical therapy
- Nutrition and dietary consultation
- Referrals to social work and psychological counseling
- Referral to Hoosier Burn Camp, which helps children cope with recovery from their burn injury as they continue to grow and develop.

“Coordinated outpatient care is critically important for children recovering from burn injuries—especially children under the age of 2. Rapid growth during childhood requires frequent evaluation of the healing and scarring process to ensure the child's mobility and function are not adversely affected.”

Angela Seitz, RN  
Outpatient services, Riley Burn Center



## Rehabilitation

The Riley Burn Center is committed to helping patients regain maximum function and independence so they can return to their life and the activities they enjoy. Our full-time physical therapists and occupational therapists are experienced in the unique recovery and rehabilitative needs of pediatric burn patients. Physical and occupational therapy are a part of every burn patient's care plan from their first inpatient day. The Riley Burn Center and Inpatient Rehabilitation Center maintain a close partnership should more intensive inpatient therapy be needed. Our dedicated burn therapists continue to provide services when patients are discharged to outpatient care. Rehabilitative therapy also is available for patients who are referred to Riley Children's for outpatient services. From stretching and splinting to ordering pressure garments and facilitating functional activities designed to rehabilitate injured areas of the body, the scope of rehabilitation services is customized to each patient.

"We strive to achieve our goals for range of motion and work toward the patient returning to full participation in their activities of daily living. We want our patients to succeed and work hard to help them find that path in a caring and compassionate way."

Kelly Adkins, OTR

Karen Robertson, PT, BT-C

Riley Burn Center Occupational and Physical Therapy

### Riley Burn Center physical and occupational therapists focus on:

- Minimizing the effect of scarring on mobility, gait, range of motion and functional participation
- Keeping patients on track developmentally during their recovery
- Involving the patient and family in goal setting and providing the necessary tools for successful recovery
- Educating families during all phases of burn care so rehabilitation and recovery can be continued at home
- Patients may also be referred to Hoosier Burn Camp for additional support, which helps children cope with the pain and trauma of their burn injury



## Child Life: Essential support for burn patients

To help patients and families cope with the anxiety and uncertainty of burn care, the Riley Burn Center includes dedicated support from certified Child Life specialists who have advanced education in child life, pediatric health, child development and related fields. Child Life specialists work alongside the burn center's medical professionals and therapists to meet the patient's emotional, psychosocial and developmental needs.



### Procedural support

Alternative focus techniques and non-pharmacological pain management are used to help patients cope with dressing changes and invasive procedures. From watching a pinwheel spin and listening to music to massaging a stress ball and playing on-screen games, a variety of methods are used depending on a child's age and preferences.



### Psychosocial and emotional support

Child Life specialists help patients and families understand and express their feelings about the challenges of burn treatment and hospitalization. Family education and support for siblings eases the transition from hospital to home.



### Developmental activities and school

Child Life provides age-appropriate activities for children and teenagers to express their creativity, manage their feelings and promote a sense of accomplishment. Our Child Life specialists work closely with the Riley School Program and social work to help children stay on track academically while they are in the hospital. Through the Riley School Program, an education liaison coordinates schoolwork with the child's school and child's medical needs to ensure they don't get too far behind.

Riley Children's 'Bear in the Chair' school re-entry program originated in the burn center and is designed to help educate classmates about noticeable physical and emotional differences before a patient returns to the classroom. Talking to the children helps them understand how they can be a good friend and what to expect. For the patient, it eases some of the anxiety associated with going back to school.







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