



## First Aid for Burns

A burn is damage to your body's tissues caused by heat, chemicals, electricity, sunlight or radiation. Treatment depends on the type of burn.

### First-degree burn symptoms

- Damage only to the outer layer of skin.
- Skin is red, with swelling and pain.
- It is minor unless it involves substantial portions of the hands, feet, face, groin, buttocks or major joint. In this case emergency medical attention is required.

### Second-degree burn symptoms

- Damage to first and second layer of skin.
- Skin is blistered, intense red, and/or has a splotchy appearance.
- Swelling and severe pain.
- Burned area is no larger than 7.5cm in diameter. If burned area is larger or if substantial parts of the hands, feet, face, groin, buttocks or major joint are involved, seek emergency medical attention.

### Third-degree burn symptoms

- Damage to the deepest layer of skin and tissues underneath.
- Areas may appear charred black, dry and white.
- May be painless.
- Difficulty breathing.

**Minor burns:** should heal without further treatment. The skin may be scarred. Watch for signs of infections: increased pain, redness, fever, swelling or oozing. If infection develops seek medical help. Avoid breaking blisters. If blisters are already broken, keep wound clean and apply antibiotic ointment.

**Call a doctor if:** pain is still present after 48 hours or if signs of infection develop (increased pain, redness, swelling, drainage or pus from the burn, swollen lymph nodes, red streaks spreading from the burn, or fever).



### First & second-degree burn care

- Remove victim from danger. Cool the burn under cold running water for 10 - 30 minutes or until the pain subsides, or immerse the burn in cold water or cover with cold compresses.
- Cover with dry, sterile, non-adhesive gauze bandages or other clean material (even cling film) without putting pressure.
- Cautiously remove watches, jewelry, belts, shoes or any other constricting items or clothes from around the burned area before swelling develops.
- Take a pain reliever such as aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen (Depon). Never give aspirin to children or teenagers.

### Caution

- Do not apply ice on a burn.
- Do not apply any ointments, grease, butter, creams, Betadine, Hydrogen Peroxide, alcohol or oils on a burn.
- Do not burst or break any blisters.
- Do not peel off any clothes or any other items adhered to a burn



### Major & third-degree burns care

- Follow steps above and also:
- Call 166 at once! Do not delay victim's transportation to the hospital.
- Do not immerse extensive burns in water, this could lead to shock.
- Check victim for responsiveness, breathing and pulse.
- If victim stops breathing be prepared to deliver CPR until EKAB arrives.
- Elevate burned limbs above heart level, if possible, to avoid shock.
- Do not give victim anything to eat or drink, they might need anesthesia.

### Seek emergency medical attention if:

- The burn is extensive or severe (3rd degree).
- You aren't sure how serious it is.
- The burn is caused by chemicals or electricity.
- The person shows signs of shock.
- The person inhaled smoke.
- Physical abuse is the known or suspected cause of the burn.
- The burn involves a child or an infant.
- If there are signs of dehydration: thirst, dry skin, dizziness, lightheadedness, or decreased urination.

### IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Ambulance: 166

Poison first aid: 210 779-3777

Pharmacies on duty: 14944

Emergency Hospitals: 14944

European Emergency Number: 112

• Authored by: Theodora Beliami, ACG nurse, ACG Health & Wellness Center  
• Edited by: Christina Drakonikis, Associate Dean of Students

Sources for brochure: American Red Cross, Mayo Clinic, Medline Plus