

What is a Burn?

A burn is tissue injury resulting from excessive exposure to thermal, electrical or chemical agents.

Burns are usually classified as:

1st Degree:

Superficial burn resulting in an injury to the outer layer of skin. The skin will appear red and feel warm and tender to the touch; no blisters present.

2nd Degree:

Injury to all layers of skin. Skin will appear red and feel warm and painful; blisters are usually present.

3rd Degree:

All layers of skin are destroyed and injury extends to underlying tissue; surface may appear charred. This type of burn is usually less painful because nerves have been damaged.

Treatment of Burns

(Less than 50% of the body)

INITIAL TREATMENT:

1. Begin cooling of the burned portion by immersion in cool water (50°F). This will bring almost immediate relief of the pain and will aid in the healing of the burn. A cool compress may be used if immersion is not possible.
2. Do not break blisters if present
3. Do not apply anything to your burn unless it has been approved by your physician!

FOLLOW-UP TREATMENT:

1. This may vary depending on the type of burn and the area involved.
2. Return in _____ days for dressing change.

3. Apply thin layer of Silvadene (a sulfa base antibiotic) and apply dressing _____ x daily.

-or-

4. Apply over-the-counter antibiotic ointment daily to the burned area and cover with a bandage or dressing. Avoid touching ointment tube to the skin. Any of the following name brand antibiotic ointments may be used:

Bacitracin
Neosporin
Polysporin
Triple antibiotic
Mycitracin

5. If possible, elevate the area of the body that is burned in order to decrease swelling.
6. Watch for signs of infection, including:

Redness
Swelling
Red streaks
Increased pain
Pus draining
Fever

7. As your burn heals do not expose it to direct sunlight or harsh chemicals.
8. Your physician will recommend pain relief measures as indicated.
9. Your tetanus status is important. The physician will decide whether a tetanus booster is indicated, based on the type of burn and the potential for tetanus infections.
10. If you have any questions, please call your physician.