



PAN-AFRICAN
MANAGED CARE

Burns Awareness Month

May 2023



Burns Awareness Month

According to the World Health Organisation, nearly 75% of burns in young children are from liquid, hot tap water, or steam. Another 20% are considered "contact" burns from touching a hot object like a clothes iron or hair appliance.

What are the classifications of burns?

Burns are classified by degree depending on how deeply and severely they penetrate the skin's surface: first, second, third, or fourth. It may be impossible to classify a burn immediately when it occurs. It can progress over time so you may not know the full extent for a day or two.

- First-degree (superficial) burns

First-degree burns affect only the outer layer of skin, the epidermis. The burn site is red, painful, dry, and has no blisters. Mild sunburn is an example. Long-term tissue damage is rare and often consists of an increase or decrease in the skin colour.

- Second-degree (partial thickness) burns

Second-degree burns involve the epidermis and part of the lower layer of skin, the dermis. The burn site looks red, blistered, and may be swollen and painful.

- Third-degree (full thickness) burns

Third-degree burns destroy the epidermis and dermis. They may go into the innermost layer of skin, the subcutaneous tissue. The burn site may look white or blackened and charred.

- Fourth-degree burns.

Fourth-degree burns go through both layers of the skin and underlying tissue as well as deeper tissue, possibly involving muscle and bone. There is no feeling in the area since the nerve endings are destroyed.



1

Cool the burn.

Run cool running water over the burn for about five minutes. This helps stop the burning process and decreases pain and swelling. Do not put ice on a burn. Do not rub a burn, because this can worsen the injury. Do not break blisters as this can increase the risk of infection at the burn site.

2

Cover the burn.

Cover the burned area with a clean bandage that will not stick to the burned site. This helps decrease the risk of infection and decreases pain.

3

Protect the burn.

Keep the burn site clean with gentle washing with soap and water. Do not apply any ointments to the burn site unless instructed by your paediatrician. Never apply butter, greases, or other home remedies to a burn before discussing with your paediatrician, as these can increase the risk of infection as well.

FIRST AID FOR BURNS



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What not to do for a burn

1. Do not use ice on a burn. It may delay healing.
2. Do not rub a burn, it can increase blistering.
3. Do not put butter, grease, mustard or powder on a burn.
4. All these so-called home remedies actually can make the injury worse.

10 tips to protect children from scalds & burns

- Avoid carrying your baby and hot liquids like coffee, tea or soup at the same time. And do not hold or cradle your baby near hot liquids on the stove or tabletops. Even a small splash could scald your baby.
- Protect your child from tap water scalds, adjust your water heater.
- Make sure young children cannot reach the microwave. Also, stir microwaved food well or let it stand for two minutes so the heat can distribute evenly.
- Do not leave food cooking on the stove unattended. Place fire extinguishers in the kitchen and elsewhere around the home where the risk of fire is greatest, such as the furnace room and near the fireplace. Always turn pot handles toward the back of the stove to prevent your child from reaching them.
- Fireplaces, woodstoves, imbawula and paraffin or gas heaters should be screened so your child can't get near them. Gas fireplaces with glass doors get extremely hot, stay hot long after the fireplace is turned off, and can cause severe burns when touched. Check electric baseboard heaters, radiators, and even vents from hot-air furnaces to see how hot they get when the heat is on. They may need to be screened, too.

- Do not have lit candles in areas that are easily reachable by a child. Store matches, cigarette lighters and candles out of your child's reach. Also avoid smoking indoors, and never allow anyone to smoke near your baby.
- Practice home fire safety and family fire drills. Teach your children to stop, drop, and roll on the ground if their clothing catches fire.
- Lock up flammable liquids in the home. It is best to store them outside the home, out of children's reach, and away from heat or ignition sources.
- Avoid using fireworks, even those meant for consumer use. Fireworks can cause burns and eye injuries. It is advisable to rather attend public firework displays. Children should never play with fireworks and should never pick up pieces of fireworks after an event, as it may still be ignited and explode any time.
- Protect your child's skin from too much sun. Try to limit your sun exposure between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm when UV rays are strongest. Wear protective clothing and sunscreen.



References

1. (<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/>)
2. <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/fireworks.html#:~:text=What%20Are%20the%20Dangers%20of,the%20lighting%20to%20the%20professionals>