

Burns

Definition

- Burns to the skin
- A burn is a heat, chemical or electrical injury to the skin

Health Information

Symptoms

- **1st degree.** Red skin without blisters. Burns are painful.
- **2nd degree.** Red skin with blisters. Heals from the bottom up, not from the edges. Takes 2 to 3 weeks. Small closed blisters act as a natural bandage.
- **3rd degree.** Deep burns with white or charred skin. There are no blisters in 3rd degree burns. Skin feeling is lost. Heals in from the edges. Grafts are often needed if it is larger than a quarter in size. (Burns over 1 inch or 2.5 cm.) Skin grafts help limit scarring.

Causes

- Contact with heaters, irons, curling irons, fires and hot liquids

Prevention

- Careful adult supervision of young children
- Education of older children about high risk behaviors

Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
 - Minor burns can be treated at home.
 - This includes some small blisters.
 - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **Pain Medicine:**
 - For pain, put a cold wet washcloth on the burn.
 - Also, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen for a few days.
3. **Cleansing:**
 - Wash the burn gently with warm water.
 - Do not use soap unless the burn is dirty. Reason: Soaps can slow healing.
4. **Closed Blisters:**
 - Don't open any small closed blisters.
 - The outer skin protects the burn from infection.
5. **Antibiotic Ointment for Open Blisters:**
 - For any broken blisters, use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin. No prescription is needed.
 - Then cover it with a Band-Aid. Change the dressing every other day.
 - Each time, clean the area. Use warm water and 1 or 2 gentle wipes with a wet washcloth.
 - Then re-apply the dressing with antibiotic ointment.

6. **What to Expect:**

- Most often, burns hurt for about 2 days.
- It will peel like a sunburn in about a week.
- First- and second-degree burns don't leave scars.

Call Your Doctor If

- Pain becomes severe
- Burn starts to look infected (spreading redness, pus)
- Burn not healed after 10 days
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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