

Burns

Definition:

Burns are wounds or injuries that can be caused by fire, chemicals, hot objects, fluids or electricity.

Burns are medical problems and sometimes can be major emergencies.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Red or flushed skin
- Swelling
- Severe Pain
- Itching and irritation
- Blisters and skin eruptions
- Waxy white skin
- Blackened skin, when the burn is severe

Classification of Burns:

- **The First-degree burn:**
This is a small burn that affects the external layer of the skin, called the epidermis. It causes mild redness and pain and can be treated with first-aid treatment or burn ointment for about one week.
- **The Second-degree burn:**
This is a burn that affects the epidermis and the dermis or second layer of skin. It causes redness of the skin, blisters, pain and swelling. In some cases it can cause skin scars
- **The Third-degree burn:**
This is a burn that affects the epidermis, the dermis and the subcutaneous tissue. It causes skin stiffness, numbness and can even damage nerves.
- **The Fourth-degree burn:**
This is a burn that goes deeper than the subcutaneous tissue into the nerves, muscles and even bones. The skin is blackened; it is the most severe burn.

Treatment:

Treatment of burns depends on their degree

Mild burns can be treated at home by calming the skin with cool water and applying burn ointment or gel.

Deep or extensive burns require medical assistance or hospitalization.

Burns can be prevented by taking specific precautions like avoiding smoking at home; keeping matches out of the reach of children, protecting your gas oven, protecting electricity plugs, and many other related safety measures.

To differentiate a minor burn from a major one, you must find out the extent of harm to body tissues.

The classification of burns mentioned above can help you a lot.

For mild burns, including first-degree burns and second-degree burns that are no larger than 7.5 cm in diameter, consider the following measures:

- Calm the burn or cool it.
- Put the burned parts under cool running water for 15 minutes or until the pain decreases. Make sure the water is cool but not cold. If this is not enough, plunge the burn into cool water or put cold pads on it. Cooling the burn decreases swelling. Never put ice on a burn.
- Protect the burn with a clean bandage or sterile gauze without applying pressure on it.
- Do not use cotton in burn cases as the fibers can get inside the wound.
- Take a pain reliever to reduce pain.

In severe burns, including third and fourth degree burns, muscle and bone can be affected or even damaged.

The skin may appear waxy, dry and even black.

Breathing difficulties may occur.

Third and fourth degree burns require immediate hospitalization.