

DESCRIPTION

Injury to the skin from contact with heat, radiation, electricity, sunlight, or chemicals. Sometimes internal organs may also be injured. The risk of damage is greatest with infants and young children.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Thin or superficial burns (1st-degree burns) are limited to the upper skin layer. They cause redness, tenderness, pain, and swelling.
- Partial thickness burns (2nd-degree burns) affect deeper skin layers. Symptoms are more severe and usually include red, painful blisters that heal without scarring.
- Full thickness burns (3rd-degree burns) involve all skin layers. Skin is white, charred and may have a waxy appearance. There may be no pain in the initial stages.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Most persons recover if the burns affect less than 50% of the body's surface.
- For less severe burns, skin usually heals in 1 to 3 weeks.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Infection.
- Shock, due to loss of fluids from the body.
- Major burns can cause lung, heart, and kidney problems, or even death.

TREATMENT MEASURES

Place the burned area in cold water, hold it under running water, or use wet compresses on it for 15 minutes (longer for chemical burns). This will reduce pain and swelling.

Use an aloe vera cream or antibiotic ointment. Wrap the area loosely with sterile gauze dressing. This helps protect the area. Change the dressing each day.

Keep the burned area higher than the rest of the body, if possible.

- Emergency care and a hospital stay are usually needed for severe burns. Complications, such as lung damage from smoke, may need treatment. There are special burn centers for the most serious cases. Surgery may be needed to graft skin, and rehabilitation may be needed after burns start healing.
- Do not use butter, oil or ice on a burn
- Don't break blisters. This can cause infection.

MEDICATIONS

- You may take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain. Prescription pain medication may also be needed.
 - Antibiotic medications may be prescribed to help prevent an infection.
 - A tetanus booster will be needed if it is not up-to-date.
 - Hospital care may be needed for 3rd degree or burns that affect the face, hands or genitals.
 - Oral steroids may also be prescribed to reduce inflammation.
 - You should begin your steroid prescription today.
 - You should begin your steroid prescription tomorrow.
- Unless your doctor tells you differently, always finish the full course of your antibiotic and/or steroid prescription, even if you start to feel better.
- Antibiotics and steroids may interfere with the effectiveness of birth control pills. Use an alternative method of contraception for the remainder of the month after finishing your antibiotic and/or steroid prescription.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF

- You notice signs of infection, such as; redness, swelling, red streaks, odor or drainage.
- You develop a fever chills or increased pain in the burn area.