

Burn Prevention and Treatment



Burn Sources

- Heat (hot liquids such as water, coffee, steam, or grease)
- Chemicals (battery acid, bleach)
- Electricity (lightning, electrical shock)

Burn Prevention

- Set the water heater to 120 degrees.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from any heat sources such as a cook stove or fireplace.
- Use the back burners on the cook stove first.
- Keep pot handles turned to the back of the stove so young children can't grab them.
- Slide a lid on grease fires. Baking soda or a fire extinguisher will also work. Never use water, salt or baking powder to fight a grease fire.
- Be careful with food cooked in a microwave. It can cause steam burns.
- Always ensure an adult is in a room where a candle is burning, a space heater is running, a fireplace is heating, etc.
- Wear tight clothing or short sleeves. Loose clothing can catch on fire.
- Keep appliance cords high-up on the counter, away from curious hands.
- Unplug electrical appliances
- Install and maintain smoke alarms in your home.
- If a fire is bigger than a small trash can, get out and call 911 from a neighbor's home.

Burn Classification and Treatment

- **First Degree Burn**
Skin is pink, dry without blisters. This burn involves only the outer layer of skin.
Example: mild sunburn.
Treatment: Cool the skin with lots of cool (not ice cold) water. Cool water helps stop the burning process, eases pain and helps decrease swelling. Call for medical help if a first degree burn is large and involves the face, feet or hands.
- **Second Degree Burn**
Skin is pink to cherry red with blisters (i.e. mild scald burn). This burn involves deeper layers of skin.
Example: mild scald burn.
Treatment: Call for medical help. Blisters should be left alone to help prevent infection.
- **Third Degree Burn**
Skin is charred or white. This burn involves all skin layers.
Example: Pain may not be present (at first) because the nerves have been damaged.
Treatment: Call for medical help. This type of burn requires skin grafts and involves a long, sometimes years, painful recovery.