

Burns: How to treat and prevent



Stay safe when using fires or hot liquids

Ouch! I burned my skin, now what?

First Degree

- ▶ Put the affected area in cool water or apply a cold, wet compress
- ▶ Apply petroleum jelly a few times each day
- ▶ Consider taking over-the-counter pain medicine like acetaminophen or ibuprofen to ease pain
- ▶ Protect the affected area from the sun

Second Degree

- ▶ Follow all first degree burn treatment recommendations
- ▶ Don't break any blisters
- ▶ Apply a bandage if the skin or blisters are likely to become irritated by clothing or daily activity, or if the blisters have broken open

Third Degree

- ▶ Seek immediate medical attention
- ▶ While waiting for medical help to arrive, cover the affected area in a clean bandage and attempt to raise the affected area above the heart

How to avoid getting burned

It's likely you'll experience a burn at some point. Accidents happen! However, there are some steps you can take to reduce the risk of injuring you or those around you.

- ▶ Keep hot foods and beverages away from table edges
- ▶ Don't leave hot beverages or cooking pots and pans unattended around children or pets
- ▶ If using a travel mug be sure to use a spill-proof lid
- ▶ Don't overfill cups or bowls
- ▶ Warn others when a hot liquid or dish is being served
- ▶ Use oven mitts when cooking or handling hot food and drinks
- ▶ Warn others when household appliances such as a stove or iron may be hot

Getting warm gone wrong: How bad is my burn?

First Degree

What it means: Only the top layer of skin is affected

What it looks like: The top layer of skin is red and painful

What might have caused it: Splashing a cup of hot tea



Second Degree

What it means: The first and second layers of the skin are affected

What it looks like: Skin looks wet or moist and blisters may form

What might have caused it: Making contact with a hot stove burner



Third Degree

What it means: All three layers of skin are affected

What it looks like: Skin is black, white, or red with a leathery appearance

What might have caused it: Being caught in a fire



SOURCE: National Institute of General Medical Sciences