

SHOULD I GO TO THE DOCTOR?

Go to the **EMERGENCY ROOM** if you have:

- Electrical burn.
- Burns in concerning areas of the body, such as the face, major joints, or genitalia.
- Burns that involve deep layers of skin, cover a large area of the body and/or appear charred with patches of white and black.
- If you suspect breathing in smoke or fumes (smoke inhalation) has occurred.

Visit doctor in clinic:

- The burnt skin becomes infected (spreading redness, increasing pain)
- A large blister occurs. A blister means a partial-thickness burn and it may be best to see a doctor or nurse.
- The burnt skin does not heal within 2 weeks
- If you have any concerns about your condition.

CARE FOR BURN INJURY

(1) Pain and itch:

- Take pain relief medications on regular basis especially in the first few days.
- The injured skin may itch. Regular application of cool moisturizing cream (where applicable) can help especially for sunburn.

(2) Dressings:

- Dressing is applied to protect the area and from contamination.
- Leave the dressing on till you visit your nurse/doctor (unless told to change the dressing yourself). Typically, your dressings may need to be changed every 2-3 days.
- However, if you notice:
 - a. The dressing is loose or too tight;
 - b. The dressing becomes wet, or the wound leaks through;
 - c. You have pain that is not relieved by taking regular pain killers;

CARE FOR BURN INJURY

- d. The dressing is smelly;
- e. You feel unwell and have a high temperature;

Please contact your healthcare providers for advice.

(3) Nourishment: Your body need extra fluid and protein for the wound healing.

(4) Exercise and elevation:

- The area that you have injured usually becomes swollen. It is important to elevate the affected area as much as possible.
 - Legs/feet should be resting at a level higher than your hip.
 - Hand injuries should be higher than your heart.
 - Facial injuries – you should sleep with at least 3 pillows.
- Gentle exercise of the area is also important.
 - Hands – stretch your hand as wide as you can and then make a fist.
 - Legs and feet – gently rotate your foot and pull your toes towards you.
 - Facial injuries – grin and blow kisses to ease and tightness to the face.
 - These should be done every hour while you are awake.

(5) Moisturising:

- After the injured skin has healed, it requires regular moisturising to prevent the area from drying, cracking and becoming sore.
- Moisturising should be carried out 2–3 times per day.
- Moisturising creams or simple emollients should be applied gently but you should gradually increase pressure until massage is possible.
- After healed, protect the injured area from sun exposure with sunscreen for a few months.



BURN INJURIES

WHAT CAUSES BURNS?

Anyone can get burned.

In young children, most burns happen because of sun exposure (sunburn), their bathwater is too hot, or they pull hot items from the microwave or off counters or stovetops. Older children and teenagers usually get burns from fires by playing with lighters, firecrackers, or gasoline. Adults often get burns from sun exposure, touching hot objects, or accidents.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BURNS?

1. Thermal burn (heat).
2. Radiation burn-example sunburn.
3. Chemical burn- Strong acids, alkalis, detergent, solvents.
4. Electrical burn.

HOW CAN I PREVENT BURNS?

1. If outdoors, wear clothing that protects your skin and use a broad-spectrum sunscreen that is SPF 30 or higher.
2. Reapply sunscreen every two hours or earlier when sweating, swimming, or towel-drying.
3. Set the temperature on the water heater in your house to lower than 49°C (120°F) to prevent scalding.
4. Never leave a child alone in the bathtub or near water faucets.
5. Use the back burners of the stove when children are present around.
6. Never carry a child/baby when working with or around hot objects.
7. Keep chemicals, matches, and lighters locked and out of reach.

HOW CAN I PREVENT BURNS?

8. Do not leave a child around a fireplace or electrical heater unsupervised.
9. Ensure electrical cords, appliances, and outlets are insulated properly and there is no free dangling end.
10. Ensure a fire extinguisher is available in your home and easily accessible.

WHAT TO DO IF I SUSTAIN A BURN?

(1) Safety First:

- Stop the burning process and remove any heat source.
- Remove any clothing or jewellery that are over the burn. Clothing can retain heat and so should be removed as soon as possible. However, do not pull off clothing that has stuck to the skin.
- For electrical burns - disconnect the victim from the source of electricity before attempting first aid. If you cannot switch off the electricity:
 - If the person has been injured by a low-voltage source (220-240 volts, domestic electricity supply) then remove the person from the electrical source, using a non-conductive material such as a wooden stick or wooden chair.
 - DO NOT approach a person connected to a high-voltage source.
- For chemical burns - remove the victim's affected clothing. Brush the chemical off the skin if it is in a dry form. Then wash the burn with lots and lots of water, as described below.

WHAT TO DO IF I SUSTAIN A BURN?

(2) Treat the burnt area immediately with cool water:

- Preferably, use running water, for at least 15-20 minutes. A shower or bath is useful for larger areas.
Note: do not use very cold water, ice or any objects from a freezer.
- Chemical burns should be washed with lots of water, away from the body and for longer than 20 minutes.



(3) Remove any rings, bracelets, watches from the affected area as these may cause constriction if swelling occurs.

(4) Cover the burn:

- Ideally with cling film (a thin plastic film). Apply the cling film in layers (rather than bandage around). The doctor would also be able to see through to assess the wound. Do not apply any oils or creams on the burn wound like toothpaste, mentholated oils, Ketchup, sauce etc.
- Mild burns and small blister are best left uncovered. Do not prick or remove the top layer of the skin of the blister. If blister bursts, use a dry non-adhesive dressing to soak up the weep.

(5) Take painkillers - Paracetamol or ibuprofen may help to ease pain.