

BURNS

*Definition:*

- A burn is damage to the skin or underlying tissue caused by heat. There are 3 levels of severity; 1<sup>st</sup> (Superficial), 2<sup>nd</sup> (Partial thickness), 3<sup>rd</sup> (Full thickness).

*Causes:*

- There are 5 main sources of burns; electricity, radiation (sun), thermal (something hot), chemical, and friction.

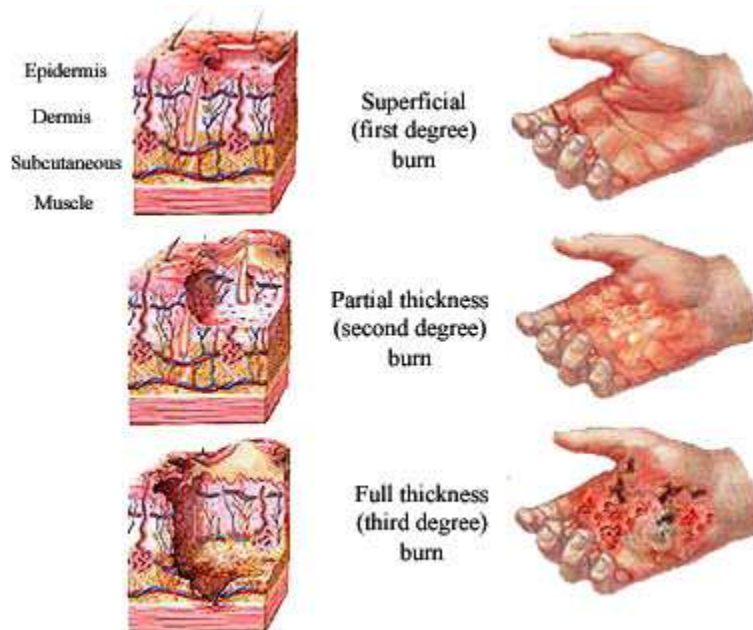
*Prevention:*

- Use safety rules.
- Use safety equipment when working with chemicals.
- Hire professionals for work dealing with e.g. electricity.
- Avoid sun exposure.
- Keep hot objects away from children.



*Warning signs:*

- 1<sup>st</sup> degree: red, swollen, pain.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> degree: red, swollen, blisters.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> degree: damaged skin to the point where the underlying tissue is visible.



*Helping:*

- For 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns you should cool the area immediately with gently running cold water for about 10-15 minutes, or until it has cooled off. Do not break any blisters as this will make the wound worse.
- For 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns do not put anything on the burn, seek medical help immediately and treat for shock. 3<sup>rd</sup> degree is extremely life threatening even when a small body part is affected. If there is clothing on the burn do not remove it as this may also remove skin. There is a very high risk of infection from this kind of burn.

Run cool water  
over area of  
burn



Cover the burn  
with a sterile  
bandage



*Notes:*

- As with all other emergencies make sure the area is safe for you first. Watch out for live wires, hot objects, chemical spills, etc.
- The severity of a burn can also be increased pending on;
  - Which part of the body is affected, e.g. face, neck.
  - The amount of the body that is burnt, e.g. only finger tip or entire arm.
- With electrical burns check for an exit wound as well as treating for the entrance wound.
- With chemical burns flush the area with lots of water to get it off the casualty's skin.
- Never apply ointments, butter, or other home remedies on burns, as this may make the burn worse, keep the heat trapped in, or cause an infection.