



Weekly Safety Meeting

First Aid for Burns

A burn can be painful or painless, according to the degree. The degree of a burn is determined by its location on the body and the number of skin layers affected. Heat, electricity, chemicals, or radiation can cause a burn. The first response in a burn situation is to stop the heat source or break contact between the heat source and the skin. The body holds in the heat and continues to burn until the skin cools. In many cases you can cool the burn with water. Unless told to by a medical professional, never use butter or ointments; they seal in heat and may cause infection. If blisters form, they should not be broken because they protect the burn from infection.

First Degree Burns (Sunburn, Redness):

- Cool the area right away. Place the affected area in a container of cold water or under cold running water. Do this for at least 15 minutes or until the pain is relieved. This will also reduce the amount of skin damage. (If the affected area is dirty, gently wash it with soapy water first.)
- Do not apply ice or cold water for too long a time. This may result in complete numbness leading to frostbite.
- Keep the area uncovered and elevated, if possible. Apply a dry dressing, if necessary.
- Do not use butter or other ointments (for example, Vaseline).
- Avoid using local anesthetic sprays and creams. They can slow healing and may lead to allergic reactions in some people.
- Call your doctor if, after 2 days, you show signs of infection (fever of 101 degrees F or higher, chills, increased redness, swelling, or pus in the infected area) or if the affected area is still painful.

Second Degree Burns:

- Immerse the affected area in cold (not ice) water until the pain subsides.
- Dip clean cloths in cold water, wring them out and apply them repeatedly to the burned area for as long as an hour. Blot the area dry. Do not rub.
- Do not break any blisters that have formed.
- Avoid applying antiseptic spray, ointments, and creams.
- Once dried, dress the area with a single layer of loose gauze that does not stick to the skin. Hold in place with bandage tape that is placed well away from the burned area.
- Change the dressing the next day and every two days after that.
- Prop the burnt area higher than the rest of the body, if possible.

- Call your doctor if there are signs of infection (fever of 101 degrees F or higher, chills, increased redness and swelling, and pus) or if the burn shows no sign of improvement after 2 days.

Third-degree Burns:

- All third-degree burns require medical treatment. Minor third-degree burns can be treated in a doctor's office, but all others should be considered a medical emergency that requires hospital treatment, usually in a burn unit.
- Call 911 or get the person to an emergency room as soon as possible.
- If the person is on fire, do not let him or her run. Smother any flames with a blanket, jacket, or water, if available, or have the victim use the "stop, drop, and roll" method.
- Remove any clothing or jewelry from the injured area, but DO NOT remove clothing if it is stuck to the burn.
- Very briefly immerse the burned area in cold water or use a clean towel or wash cloth moistened with cold water to stop the burning process.
- Don't hold the burned area in cold water for too long or you will cool down the body too much.
- Don't use ice or ice water because they will further damage the tissue.
- Do not break open any blisters because the greater risk of infection. If the blisters are open, don't remove any clothing that might be stuck to the burn and don't run water over the burn. This will increase the risk of shock.
- Whether the blisters are broken or not, you can place a dry, sterile gauze pad over the burn, but do not use any bandages with adhesive. If the burned area is larger, lightly drape a clean sheet over it to protect it until you get medical treatment. It is important for the bandage to be loose, so the burn gets air.
- Never apply butter, oils, or burn ointments. They make it more difficult for the burn to heal and can make the burn worse because the heat can't escape.
- Arms or legs that are burned should be kept raised to reduce the amount of swelling. If the face or neck is burned, raise the person's head slightly. This will also help if they are having trouble breathing.
- If the person appears to be going into shock, lay him or her flat on the ground, raise the feet around 12 inches (30 cm), and call for medical help. You can cover the patient with a blanket to keep them warm.
- Do not give a person who is in shock anything to drink, however you can provide the patient with small sips of clear liquid, such as water or juice.

Remember:

Before an accident happens, know the location of the first aid kit, the nearest telephone or communications method, and medical facility. Burns can be painful and cause irreparable damage in seconds. You must be able to respond appropriately and get medial help as quickly as possible.

SAFETY IS A FULL TIME JOB...DON'T MAKE IT A PART TIME PRACTICE!!

