

First Aid for Minor Burns

INITIAL FIRST AID TREATMENT

Seek medical attention as soon as possible

DO'S

- Stop the burning process: cool the burn with running cool (not cold) water for at least 5 minutes. But do not use ice, as this may cause further skin damage. Do not over cool! If victim starts to shiver, stop the cooling process.
- Remove all jewelry, watches, rings, and clothing around the burned area as soon as possible.
- Administer an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen for pain control. Follow the directions on the label. Consult a physician or health care provider if pain is not relieved.
- Cover the burn with a sterile gauze bandage or clean cloth. Wrap the burned area loosely to avoid putting too much pressure on the burn tissue.
- Minor burns will usually heal without further treatment.
- For small area burns, apply soothing lotions that contain aloe vera to the burned area to help relieve the pain and discomfort.
- Seek medical attention if there is a persistent fever not relieved by medication or redness that may extend beyond the border of the burn or pain is not controlled by ibuprofen or acetaminophen.
- Drink plenty of fluids (electrolyte containing solutions such as Gatorade) if the person appears to be dehydrated.

DON'TS

- Do not apply ice — this may cause further damage to the skin.
- Do not use any butter, ointments, or other home remedies on the burn. Such substances may trap the heat in the tissue and makes the burn worse.
- Do not break any blisters—leave intact.
- Do not delay seeking medical attention if the burn is larger than the size of the victim's palm.

SECOND-DEGREE BURN

occurs when the second layer of skin (dermis) is burned. This burn usually has the following characteristics: very red, blister formation, extremely painful, and a fair amount of swelling. In general, if a second degree burn is smaller than 2-3 inches (7 centimeters) it may be treated as a minor burn. If the area burned is larger than this, or involves functional parts of the body such as feet, face, eye, ears, groin, or located over major joints, more in-depth medical attention is needed. Take the person to the nearest emergency room, family doctor, or minor emergency clinic to have the burn evaluated.



**BURN
PREVENTION**

American Burn Association
312-642-9260
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Improving the lives of those
affected by burn injuries