

When the skin is burned, the small blood vessels underneath the skin leak body fluid. This leaking fluid is forced into the tissues and forms blisters, or the fluid can leak through the skin. Burns, which effect large areas of the body, causes an excessive loss of body fluids causing shock.

With burns which occur on the limbs, the body fluid accumulates in the tissues causing swelling and an increase in pain.

Burns to the face, neck and chest area will cause breathing difficulties.

## Signs and Symptoms may include:

### Partial Thickness Burns:

- Reddened skin
- Blisters
- Swelling
- Peeling skin around burnt area.
- Very painful

### Full Thickness Burns

- Deep tissue burns
- Skin may look white.
- Skin may look black and charred.
- Body fluid loss.
- Shock
- Relatively painless due to nerve damage.
- Pain may occur around the edges of the burn.
- Dehydration

## Causes of burns

### Fire:

In the case of fire remember the following: Danger from Fire and smoke Fumes given off from plastic materials, furnishings, paint. Cover your mouth and nose with a wet cloth, Crouch low and crawl out (GO GO GO).

### Facial, Neck and Airway (Inhalation) Burns:

Maintain an open airway by giving small sips of cool water and place cold compress around the neck and throat and seek medical aid.

### Bitumen and plastic burns:

Do not remove from the skin unless it is obstructing the airway and cool running water minimum 30 minutes.

### Electrical and Lightning Burns

Beware of danger. While the surface of the skin may look undamaged, deep tissue burns may have occurred.

### Chemical Burns:

Check MSDS or ring poison's information on 131126.



## Treatment for Burns:

Follow the Basic First Aid Plan to assess the casualty

- ✓ Watch for danger.
- ✓ Remove casualty from danger.
- ✓ Put out any flames - stop - drop & roll.
- ✓ Cool the burn by placing the burnt area under gently running cold water for up to 20 minutes.
- ✓ Remove constrictive jewellery and clothing if not stuck.
- ✓ Cover the burn loosely with a clean sterile non stick dressing, non fluffy sheet or material, plastic wrap.
- ✓ If possible elevate the burnt area.
- ✓ If pain persists, continue to cool with cold water.
- ✓ Call for assistance immediately.
- ✓ Monitor Airway and Breathing.



## When to seek medical aid:

- ✓ When a partial thickness burn, which may have associated blisters, is larger than a 20 cent piece.
- ✓ Full thickness burns.
- ✓ Burns involving the face, hands, airway, chest, or genital area.
- ✓ Burns affecting a large area of the body, particularly in the elderly, small children and babies.
- ✓ Not sure how bad the burn is?

## DO NOT

- ✗ Place yourself in danger when attempting a rescue. Please apply caution and common sense.
- ✗ Remove clothing, footwear, or jewellery which is stuck to the skin.
- ✗ Break blisters, this causes the risk of infection.
- ✗ Use adhesive plaster.
- ✗ Apply fats, oils, butter, lotions or cream.
- ✗ Underestimate the extent of the burns especially burns involving the airway.
- ✗ Use cotton wool, towels, fluffy material, blankets, or plastic adhesives.
- ✗ Over cool the casualty – shivering is a sign.
- ✗ Give alcohol or tobacco.

**Remember: - Shock can occur quickly!**

If an Ambulance is required - call immediately - do not delay

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