

Burns and Scalds

Description:

Burns can be caused by flame, UV radiation, hot liquids, electricity, lightning and certain chemicals. Major burns are a medical emergency and require urgent medical attention. In some cases, skin graft surgery is needed.

Different types of burns

There are three levels of burns:

Superficial - these burns cause damage to the first or top layer of skin. The burn site will be red and painful.

Partial thickness - includes damage to the first and second skin layers. The burn site will be red, peeling, blistering and swelling with clear or yellow-coloured fluid leaking from the skin. The burn site is very painful.

Full thickness - involves damage to both skin layers, plus the underlying tissues, muscle, bone and organs. The burn site generally appears black or charred with white exposed fatty tissue or bone. Yellow in the wound is likely to be exposed muscle tissue. The nerve endings are generally destroyed and, therefore, there is little or no pain experienced at the site of the full thickness burn. However, surrounding partial thickness burns will be very painful.

Major burns are a medical emergency and require urgent treatment.

First aid treatment is to apply cool running water over the burn site for a minimum of 20 minutes.

HealthInsite Information:

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