

# UNDERSTANDING BURNS

## Understand Your Burn Degree

There are three degrees of burns.

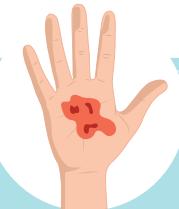
### First-Degree Burns

These are superficial burns affecting the outer layer of skin, which typically heal in 7-10 days.



### Second-Degree Burns

These burns involve deeper layers of skin, may blister, and take weeks to heal.



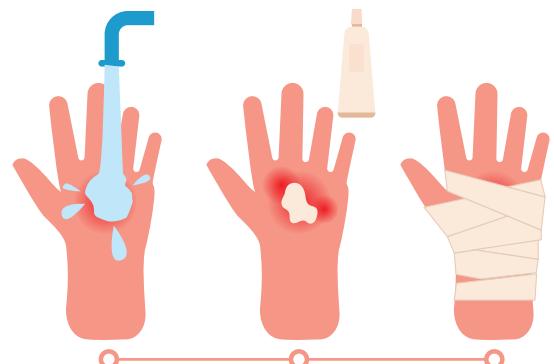
### Third-Degree Burns

With third-degree burns, there is damage to all layers of the skin and specialised care, including skin grafts, may be required.



## Wound Care Tips

- Keep the Burn Clean:** Gently wash with mild soap and water, and avoid scrubbing.
- Avoid Popping Blisters:** Blisters act as a protective barrier. If they rupture, keep the area clean and covered.
- Moisturise:** Keep the area moist with recommended ointments (e.g., silver sulfadiazine, aloe vera, or petroleum jelly) to promote healing and prevent scarring.



## Manage Pain

- Use over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen if advised.
- Avoid tight clothing or pressure on the burn.
- Elevate the burn area to reduce swelling.
- Apply cool compresses (not ice) to help soothe pain.



## Prevent Scarring

- Avoid exposing the burn to direct sunlight. Use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) on healed areas.
- Massage the burn gently with unscented moisturiser once healed to improve skin elasticity.

## Follow-Up Appointments

Attend all scheduled follow-ups to monitor healing. Be sure to contact a doctor if healing is delayed or if complications arise.

## When to Seek Immediate Medical Attention

Infection is one of the most common problems that can occur following burns. These are some common signs of infection.

- Increased pain or changes in sensation (e.g., numbness)
- A wound that starts to smell or exude a green/yellow discharge
- Redness or swelling that spreads rapidly beyond the burn site or warmth around the burn
- Fever, chills, or flu-like symptoms



## FAQs

### Some Common Questions about Burns

#### Q: How can I prevent infection in a burn?

**A:**

- Wash your hands before touching the burn.
- Keep the wound clean and covered with sterile, non-stick dressings.
- Follow prescribed dressing change instructions.
- Watch for signs of infection like redness, swelling, pus, or fever.

#### Q: Can I pop blisters on a burn?

**A:** No. Blisters protect the underlying skin and reduce the risk of infection. If a blister pops on its own, clean the area and cover it with a sterile dressing.

#### Q: When can I stop covering the burn?

**A:** Stop covering the burn once it is fully healed and no longer weeping or at risk of infection. For larger burns, follow your healthcare provider's advice.