

Burns and Scalds

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1. Definition

- Burns: Injuries caused by heat, electricity, chemicals, or radiation damaging the skin and underlying tissues.
- Scalds: Burns caused by hot liquids or steam.

2. Classification

- First-degree: Minor burns affecting only the outer layer of skin.
- Second-degree: Burns that extend through the second layer of skin, causing blisters and pain.
- Third-degree: Severe burns that penetrate all layers of skin, potentially affecting muscles and bones.

3. Causes

- Heat: Contact with flames, hot objects, steam, or hot liquids.
- Electricity: Contact with electrical sources causing thermal burns.
- Chemicals: Exposure to corrosive substances damaging the skin.
- Radiation: Overexposure to UV rays or radioactive materials.

4. Symptoms

- Redness, swelling, and pain.
- Blisters for second-degree burns.
- Charred skin or white patches for third-degree burns.

5. Treatment

- Cool the burn with cold water for at least 20 minutes.
- Cover the burn with a sterile dressing.
- Seek medical attention for severe burns, large affected areas, or burns on the face, hands, feet, or genitals.

6. Prevention

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- Test the temperature of hot liquids before use.
- Use caution around stoves, fires, and electrical appliances.
- Keep chemicals out of reach of children.
- Install smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in living spaces.

7. Complications

- Infection: Due to the loss of skin barrier function.
- Scarring: Especially with deeper burns.
- Hypothermia: Cooling of the body due to heat loss from the burn.

8. First Aid

- Remove the person from the source of the burn.
- Remove clothing and jewelry near the burn.
- Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth.

9. Emergency Contact

- Call emergency services if the burn is severe, covers a large area, or is on the face, hands, feet, or genitals.

Understanding burns and scalds, their causes, symptoms, treatment, and prevention measures can help in effectively managing and preventing these injuries.