Burns result in injury to the skin from contact with heat, electricity, chemicals, and radiation (i.e., sun exposure).

**Signs and Symptoms of a First Degree Burn:**

First degree burns are limited to the upper layer of skin. They produce redness, tenderness, pain and some swelling. If a large area of skin is involved, occasionally low grade (99 to 100 degrees F.) fever may occur. Sunburn is an example of a first degree burn.

**Treatment of a First Degree Burn:**

- Application of over-the-counter body creams and lotions may soothe first degree burns. Avoid lotions and creams containing perfumes, which may increase inflammation and discomfort. Eucerin cream (or similar), Aloe Vera lotions, and over the counter first aid/burn creams are acceptable.
- Application of over-the-counter 1% Hydrocortisone cream up to 3 times daily for 2 to 3 days to decrease inflammation and discomfort.
- Apply a cool compress to the burn area until the stinging stops.
- Take an over the counter pain reliever as needed according to the label directions.
- For large areas of sunburn, be sure to increase your oral fluid intake to prevent dehydration.
- If you develop fever over 100 degrees F., chills, and/or nausea, seek medical evaluation.

**Second and Third Degree Burn Symptoms and Treatment:**

**Second Degree Burns** include all symptoms of a first degree burn along with blistering of the skin. Fluid filled blisters should not be broken. Cover open areas (broken blisters) with an antibiotic ointment and a clean dry bandage.

**See a health care provider as soon as possible.**

**Third degree burns** involve all skin layers including nerve endings and occasionally underlying muscle. The skin may appear white (which indicates it has been “cooked” due to the heat). There may be no pain in the initial stages because the nerve endings have been damaged or destroyed.

**Burns of this severity should immediately be evaluated at your nearest Emergency Room.**

Developed May 2003
Reviewed January 2012, January 2015, January 2016
Revised January 2012
Self Care for Burns