Thermal Burns Treatment

Self-Care at Home

The most important first step is to stop the burning process.

- Put out any fire or flames (the common advice is to 'stop, drop, and roll') to put out flames on your clothing. Remove hot or burned clothing, if possible, or stop contact with the hot steam, liquid, or a hot object.
- Cool the injured area with water (not ice) within 30 seconds. This may limit the extent and severity of the burn. Run your burned hand or finger, for example, immediately under cool tap water for several minutes.

Control the pain.

- Apply a cool wet compress for pain relief. Do not use ice. This may worsen the injury to the skin.
- Other common remedies, such as butter or mayonnaise have not been proven to work; and may increase the chance of infection.
- You may also use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) for pain as directed on the bottle.

Begin the healing process.

- For small burns and burns that are superficial in nature, you may use a triple antibiotic ointment. This will aid in healing and limit the chance of infection.
- Do not remove blisters at home, especially those on the palms of the hands or on the soles of the feet.

Medical Treatment

Depending on the nature and severity of the burned area, these treatments may be given.

- Gentle cleansing may be performed of the burned area.
Blisters will be cared for. Some doctors may debride blisters (cut away dead tissue). Others may leave them intact. There is no right or wrong approach. Blisters on the soles of the feet or palms of the hands will usually be left intact.

Depending on the extent of the burn, the doctor may order fluids to be taken by mouth or to be administered by IV.

Also, depending on the severity and extent of the burn, the doctor may advise or request that care be continued at a special Burn Center. Specific criteria exist for such cases and have been established by the American Burn Association. Criteria may include any full thickness burn greater than 5%; partial thickness burn greater than 20% in people between ages 10–50; any partial thickness burn greater than 10% in children younger than 10 years and older than 50 years of age; any significant burns to the ears, eyes, hands, feet, or genitals.

For more information, read the complete article, Thermal Burns (Heat or Fire) on http://www.emedicinehealth.com.

WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth
Reviewed by Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD on August 15, 2007
Last updated: August 15, 2007
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