

# Burn wound

You have suffered a burn, you can go home from the doctor.

Here you will read:

- types of burns,
- what is the treatment of burns is,
- tips for home,
- possible complications,
- when to contact your doctor or general practitioner.

## Which are the different types of burns

There are different types of burns. This distinction is important because the treatment differs for each one :

First degree burn:

With a first-degree burn, the skin or epidermis is not yet damaged. The skin is red, dry, painful and sometimes swollen. For example, consider sunburnt skin.

Superficial second degree burn:

With a superficial second-degree burn, the skin is damaged. The skin is red, wet and painful. There is blistering.

Deep second degree burn:

In a deep second-degree burn, the skin is visibly damaged. The heat has been able to penetrate longer into the skin tissue and there is therefore clearly a wound. The wound is reddish/white, wet and very painful. Blistering can also occur here.

Third degree burn:

In a third-degree burn, the wound is white or black, dry, and leathery. You will hardly feel any pain with this burn because the nerves in the skin are affected. Third-degree burns usually occur in conjunction with second and first-degree burns.

## What is the burn treatment like?

- You can take a painkiller (paracetamol) for pain from small burn types.
- In case of a first-degree burn and a superficial second-degree burn, the treatment consists of applying a cream such as 'after sun' or body lotion.
- The doctor or nurse treats deep second-degree and third-degree burns with silver sulfadiazine cream or oily gauze.
- Large or broken blisters are removed as much as possible.
- Tetanus injection. If you received this more than 10 years ago.

## What can you also do?

You will likely visit the hospital or your GP within 1 or 2 days for a check-up. You will then receive further explanations on how to deal with the wound yourself. In general, the following applies:

- For deep second-degree and third-degree burns, it is necessary to change the dressing daily. Here you rinse the old ointment with water. Then apply ointment to the wound again.
- Once the wound has healed, the follow-up treatment consists of keeping the scar fat with cream.
- If the burn is on or near a joint, move that joint again as soon as possible. Movement prevents the joints from becoming stiff.
- Avoid direct sunlight on the scar for the first year or apply a sunscreen with a factor of 20 or higher on the scar area.

- When the burn wound heals, the skin may itch, try not to scratch.

### **Which complications can occur?**

A burn can result into an inflammation.

In the long term, the following complications may arise:

scarring;

Contractures: a permanent contraction of tissues can cause curvature of one or more joints;

movement restriction;

Sensitivity loss: due to the burn, the small sensory nerves are affected, so that the feeling in the skin is reduced or completely gone.

### **When to contact a doctor?**

Among the first signs of inflammation is a fever or hot and red wound is hot and red. It is important that you contact your treating doctor.

### **More information?**

For more information, please refer to the Emergency Department where you were treated or your General Practitioner

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