



St Andrew's First Aid  
Together We Save Lives



# BURNS & SCALDS

It's a severe burn.  
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

## RECOGNITION

- A superficial burn affects only the outermost layer of skin. There may be redness, swelling and tenderness.
- A partial thickness burn affects the epidermis. There may be redness, blistering and pain.
- A full thickness burn affects all layers of the skin, with possible damage to nerves and underlying tissues. Skin could appear black and charred or waxy white and may be painless due to nerve damage.

## TREATMENT

- Begin cooling the burn under running cold water.
- If the burn is severe, or you are unsure of the severity, dial 999/112 for an ambulance.
- Continue cooling the burn for a minimum of 10 minutes. If the burn has been caused by chemicals, cool for at least 20 minutes.
- If the pain is not relieved after this time, continue cooling the affected area for another 10 minutes.
- Put on disposable gloves if available. Gently remove any constrictions such as rings, bracelets etc. before the area starts to swell.
- Carefully remove any burnt clothing but do not remove anything sticking to the burn.
- Continue cooling until medical help arrives. Cover the burn and the surrounding area with a clean, non-fluffy dressing or a suitable clean material such as cling film or a plastic bag. Bandage loosely in place. Do not cover burns to the face.
- Monitor and record vital signs and be prepared to treat for shock.

## YOUR AIMS

- To cool the area to prevent further burning and to assess the severity of the burn.
- To relieve discomfort and pain.
- To obtain medical help if required.

## CAUTION

Do not put fats, creams or lotions onto a burn.  
Do not burst any blisters as this can introduce infection.



[firstaid.org.uk](http://firstaid.org.uk)



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The advice on this page is not designed to replace formal First Aid training.