

FAST FACTS - BURNS

Q: What is a burn?

A: A burn is the destruction of skin cells, and sometimes the underlying structures of muscle, connective tissue and bone, as the result of exposure to heat, chemical or electricity. Often the burn will cause permanent damage to the skin. Death can also result from severe burn injuries.

Q: How many burn injuries occur each year in the United States?

A: Approximately 500,000 people are treated for burn injuries each year. According to the National Fire Protection Association, each year **46 college students** sustain burn injuries in college fires. Burns also occur from other sources, and according to the National Burn Repository over **12,000 people ages 16-19 years and over 30,000 between the ages of 20-29 suffer burn injuries requiring medical attention.**

Q: What ages suffer the highest number of burn injuries?

A: Children and older adults because of their thinner skin.

Q: What are the most common causes of burn injuries for college students?

A: Scalds (from steam, hot liquids or hot water), fire and flame, and contact with hot objects (curling irons, stoves, electrical or fireworks).

Q: How do most burn injuries occur?

A: Many things can cause a severe burn injury:

Fire

The heat from a fire can sear your skin within seconds. The smoke from a fire will cause inhalation injuries or burns to the airway and lungs. Most fatalities in a fire occur from the smoke rather than the heat.

Cooking

Loose clothing can catch fire and cause burn injury so be careful while cooking. This is where stop, drop and roll is effective, if your clothing should catch fire.

Grease splattered from a frying pan can cause burns injuries. Never try to move a pan with a grease fire and NEVER put water on a grease fire.

Scald burn injury can happen when a person is using a microwave. The food or liquid heated in a microwave is extremely hot, resulting in burns from spills, splashes and steam. The face of a person using a microwave should always be higher than the microwave door.

Use caution when removing lids from hot foods, remember that steam may have accumulated. Lift the cover or lid away from your face and arm. Steam can reach temperatures over 200 degrees. Puncture plastic wrap or use vented containers to allow steam to escape while cooking. Wait at least one minute before removing the cover. When removing covers, keep the steam away from your face or arm.

Sunburn

Sunburn, a type of second degree burn to the skin, occurs when the skin is overly exposed to the sun's harmful ultra violet or "UV" rays. These UV Rays can penetrate thin clouds, haze, and fog. Avoid long sun exposure, even with sunscreen, and especially during the middle of the day. Use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15.

Fireworks

Approximately 10,000 people suffer burn injuries each year from fireworks. These injuries are the result of improper use of sparklers and illegal fireworks. Sparklers can reach temperatures as high as 3000°F. Sparklers account for the largest number of fireworks injuries each year.

Outdoor Cooking/Camping

Always keep open cooking areas and flames away from combustibles. Charcoal in a grill will remain hot for over 48 hrs. Hot ashes and coals from inadequately extinguished campfires and unsupervised grills pose the greatest danger.

NEVER use gasoline as a starter fluid or accelerant. After soaking your coals with lighter/starter fluid, wait a minute before lighting the coals. Always keep the lighter/starter fluid well away from the grill before attempting to light the coals.

Portable Camp Stove

Keep your camp stove in an open, well-ventilated area away from your camper, tent, sleeping bags, dry wood and shrubs. Secure the stove on a level, non-flammable surface. Before you lighting the stove, inspect it for and grease or food build up. Never immerse the stove in water to clean it. Before connecting the stove to the propane cylinder, make sure the valve is "OFF" If ignition doesn't occur immediately, turn off the gas and wait for it to clear before trying again. Follow manufacturer's recommendations. ALWAYS detach the propane cylinder before transporting.

Boating

Most boating fires and explosions happen during and after fueling operations. To prevent an accident, be alert for damage to your boat's fuel system. Over time, fuel fittings and fuel hoses wear out. Inspect the boat's fuel system regularly for any breaks, weaknesses or poor fittings. Refer to owner's manuals for guidance on inspecting for leaks in valves and connections; NEVER USE A MATCH

Car Radiators

When a radiator overheats, the temperature increases drastically and pressure builds. When the cap is removed, the liquid boils or even explodes out, causing serious injuries. Faces, hands, arms and chests are the most common areas burned. In addition to scalds, radiator fluid contains antifreeze which may cause chemical burns.

Q: What medical terms are used to describe burns and what do they mean?

A: There are three levels of burns:

- First degree burns affect only the outer layer of the skin. They cause pain, redness and swelling.
- Second-degree (partial thickness) burns affect both the outer layer and underlying layer of skin. They cause pain, redness, swelling and blistering.
- Third degree (full thickness) burns extend into deeper tissues. They become white or blackened, charred skin that may be numb. Third degree burns require skin grafts.

Q: On average, what are some common temperatures of everyday household items?

A: The common temperature of household items might surprise you. A few examples are:

- Stove burner, 900° Fahrenheit
- Match, 1,200° Fahrenheit
- Candle flame, 2,100° Fahrenheit
- Coffee, tea or other hot beverages, 160 to 180° Fahrenheit
- Steam from cooking, 200° Fahrenheit

Q: How quickly can my skin burn if I come into contact with a hot object?

A: At 124 degrees Fahrenheit in 3 minutes a third degree burn will occur.

At 140 degrees Fahrenheit in 5 seconds a third degree burn will occur.

Q: Why should I be concerned about getting a burn injury?

A: Burn injuries affect a person physically, emotionally and financially.

- Burn skinned has to be removed in a painful process and replaced with your own skin or skin from another source.
- Your physical appearance will be permanently changed.
- The average hospital stay is six days for a burn injury.
- A hospital stay can cost up to thousands of dollars per day.
- Depending on the type of burn there may be multiple surgeries to repair the skin.
- The affected body part may never fully function again.