

# Looking after your burn injury

## Contact details

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Notes



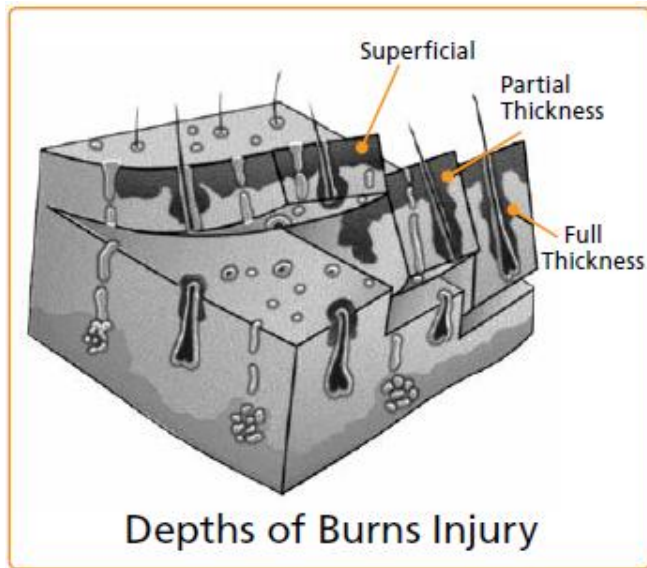
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## Information for patients

When you have a burn injury it is important you are aware of some things that will assist in your recovery.

Burns Injuries are classified by their depth of damage to the skin.



### Superficial injuries

Involve only the epidermis or outer layer of skin. They are the most common and the most minor of all burns. The skin is reddened and extremely painful. The burn will heal on its own without scarring within two to five days. There may be peeling of the skin and some temporary discolouration.

### Partial thickness injury

The first layer of skin is destroyed and the second layer, the dermal layer, is damaged but the burn does not pass through to underlying tissues. The skin appears moist and there will be intense pain, reddening, blisters and a mottled appearance to the skin. On occasions these injuries will require a skin graft. Healing is usually complete within three weeks.

### Full thickness injury

Involve all the layers of the skin. These are usually charred black and include areas that are dry and white. While a burn injury may be very painful, some patients feel little or no pain because the nerve endings have been destroyed. This type of burn may require skin grafting, depending on the size of the wound.

Your Doctor will explain which wound you have. All the above do depend on any other medical conditions you may have. They can also change depending on how your wound heals.

### Pain

It is important to take pain killers on a regular basis and not wait for the pain to be there before you take them. Your doctor may prescribe some strong pain killing tablets but taking paracetamol frequently is very effective. Ensure that no more than 8 tablets are taken in 24 hours, and that any prescribed medication doesn't already have paracetamol in them.

### Dressings

Dressings are applied to the wound to protect the area. We advise you to leave the dressings on until you return to the hospital for your appointment. But if you do have any of these concerns:

- The dressing is loose or too tight
- The dressing becomes wet, or the wound leaks through
- You have pain that is not relieved by taking regular pain killers
- The dressing is smelly
- You feel unwell and have a high temperature

Please contact the hospital for advice, or an urgent appointment.

### Nourishment

Your body needs extra protein and calories to ensure that healing can take place. We recommend at least

1 extra pint of milk a day  
or  
2 extra yoghurts  
or  
cheese and biscuits for a snack

The important thing is to make sure you have extra food and fluids.

### Exercise and elevation

The area that you have injured usually becomes swollen. It is important to elevate the affected area as much as possible.

Legs/feet should be resting at a level higher than your hip.

Hand injuries should be higher than your heart.

Facial injuries – you should sleep with at least 3 pillows.

Gentle exercise of the area is also important.

Hands – stretch your hand as wide as you can and then make a fist.

Legs and feet – gently rotate your foot and pull your toes towards you.

Facial injuries – grin and blow kisses to ease and tightness to the face.

These should be done every hour while you are awake.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of your treatment please ask a member of staff to assist you.