

Burns

There are 3 degrees of burns:

- 1st degree burns are limited to the upper skin layer. They produce redness, tenderness, pain, swelling and slight fever.
- 2nd degree burns affect deeper layers. Symptoms are more severe and usually include blisters.
- 3rd degree burns involve all skin layers. Skin is white and there may be no pain in the initial stages.

Causes

- Rise in skin temperature from heat sources, such as fire, steam or electricity.
- Open flame, hot liquid, and heated metal are the most common causes.
- Tissue injury caused by chemicals or radiation, including sunlight.
- Lightning strikes can cause internal burns with minimal external signs.

Self Care

- Immerse small 2nd and 3rd degree burn areas in cold water for 10 minutes to reduce pain and swelling.
- Apply non-prescription body lotion to cool 1st degree burns.
- Keep the burn area clean. Soak in a tub or use lukewarm plain water compresses once a day
- Seek emergency care for all large 3rd degree burns and extensive 2nd degree burns, especially if on face or hands.

Medication

- To treat minor burns, you may use non-prescription antibiotic creams, topical anesthetics and aspirin.
- To treat severe burns, pain relievers, antibiotics and tetanus booster shots may be required. See your provider.

Signs & Symptoms of Infections

Return to the clinic or contact your doctor with signs or symptoms of infection:

- increasing pain
- temperature above 100° F
- increased swelling
- red streaks radiating away from the wound

Prevention

- Wear sunscreen lotions outdoors.
- Wear protective gear and observe safety precautions around heat and radiation.
- Don't touch uncovered electrical wires. Replace frayed electrical cords.
- Fireproof your home. Install smoke alarms, plan emergency exits and have regular fire drills.
- Purchase a fire extinguisher.

- Teach children safety rules for matches, fires, electrical outlets, cords and stoves.
- If you have small children, put safety caps on unused outlets.

**Santa Barbara City College
Student Health Services
721 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
SS-170 ♦ 956-0581 ext. 2298
www.sbcc.edu/healthservices**