Burn by Degree

Lindsey Barrett

Chamberlain University

NR 103: Transition to Nursing

May 28, 2017

What is a burn?

Burns dominate when it comes to thee common household injury. A burn involves the largest organ of the human body, the skin. When skin cells are killed from an energy source like heat, chemical, kinetic, or electric, this is a burn. To determine the degree of the burn, the size, depth, and location will be assessed.

Burn by Degree

Burns are broken down into three main groups; First, second, and third degree. The depth of the burn is typically determined by how many layers of skin has physically been penetrated. A burn will need to be re-assessed within the next 48-72 hours, as they will continue to progress in depth (Warner, Coffee, & Yowler, 2014). There is also a fourth degree, which includes all the symptom of a third degree burn but goes on to influence the tendons and bones. The purpose of this paper is to explain how to recognize the different degrees of burns and if a simple treatment is appropriate.

# First Degree

A first-degree burn only impacts the epidermis. The epidermis is the outer-most layer of skin. This kind of burn is referred to as a “superficial burn”. The most common is known as a sunburn. Typical symptoms of a first-degree burn include pain, red skin, and minor inflammation. First degree burns do not usually need medical attention. The pain and redness will usually subside in 3-5 days. The healing process takes place when the dead skin cells shed and new skin grows in its place within 7-10 days. No scarring will occur.

##  Second Degree 1

“A second-degree burn has gone through the epidermis and affects the dermis, which is the deeper layer of the skin” (Herndon, 2012, para.7.) The symptoms can include pain, blisters, pink-red skin, moist-dry skin depending on the depth of the burn. This type of burn may require medical attention, again, depending on the severity of the pain and depth of the burn. The blisters may burst, this will give the burn a weepy appearance. These blisters will form scabs and usually heal nicely without scarring within 2-3 weeks. Treatment for second degree burns can consist of over the counter oral pain relief and antibiotic ointment to apply to blistered area. It’s recommended to keep the burned areas open and clean.

###  Third degree

A third-degree burn goes through all layers of the skin and requires medical attention immediately. These burns are painless because the skin nerves have been destroyed. The appearance of a third-degree burn can include a waxy-white color or a charred brown, leathery in texture, blisters that do not develop. These burns require surgery and skin grafting as the primary treatment. Compared to first and second-degree burns, this one tops the charts for complications. Due to the severity of the burn, the risk or shock, blood loss and infection are higher.

##### **Conclusion**.

Getting a prompt and adequate assessment could dramatically determine your healing process as a burn patient. Having the knowledge and being prepared with some simple tools at home could help when an unexpected, but common household burn injury occurs. Taking a few precautions could help prevent the typical first and second-degree burns.

References

 Morgan, E. D., Bledsoe, S. C., & Barker, J. (2000). Ambulatory managements of burns. American Family Physician, 62(9), 2015-2026.

Sheridan, R. (2012) *Burns:* *A practical approach to immediate treatment and long-term care*. London: Manson Publishing.

Warner, P., Coffee, T., & Yowler, C. (2014).

 Outpatient burn management*. Surgical Clinics of North America*, 94(4), 879-892.

Figure 1. [Include all figures in their own section, following references (and footnotes and tables, if applicable). Include a numbered caption for each figure. Use the Table/Figure style for easy spacing between figure and caption.]

For more information about all elements of APA formatting, please consult the APA Style Manual, 6th Edition.