

Determining Burn Depth

BURN SURGE

Burn depth is officially assessed at 24 hours after injury, as blisters and other injury may evolve.

1st Degree (Superficial) Burns

Signs & Symptoms: Erythematous, lack of blisters, dry and sensitive.

In 1st degree burn injuries, the skin function remains intact and transfer to a burn center is not required. They do NOT count towards total body surface area (TBSA) burned.

2nd Degree (Partial Thickness) Burns

Signs & Symptoms: Moist and weepy, pink or red in color, blisters present, blanches to pressure, and very painful. Can worsen substantially over the first 24 hours.

In 2nd degree burn injuries, the skin function is lost. Be wary! Deep partial thickness injuries can easily convert to or require the same management as full thickness burns. Our goal in an MCI (mass casualty incident) is to treat as many 2nd degree injuries as possible in an outpatient setting.

3rd Degree (Full Thickness) Burns

Signs & Symptoms: May be dry and leathery in appearance and to the touch, the tissue may be pale, mottled brown, black or red, with thrombosed vessels, does not blanch to pressure, insensate, hair may remove easily.

In 3rd degree burn injuries, skin function is lost and grafting is required for functional healing. 3rd degree burns will almost always require hospital admission.