



## Burns – Thermal Burns

When you burn yourself not all the damage happens at once. Because the body holds heat, the burning process can last for several minutes on up to several days or even longer in the case of serious burns. Immediate application of cold water or a cold compress is a treatment that has been found to decrease the degree and depth of a burn.

### THE TIME FACTOR

Speed is the most important single factor in burn treatment. The more quickly you cool down the burn the better your chances are of reducing its effects. Use water from a drinking fountain, sink, hose, shower or whatever water source is closest. Hold the burn under cool running water, submerge the burn in a sink full of water or place a water-soaked cloth over the burn. Add more cool water to the cloth as it absorbs the heat from the burn.



It's also important for you to continue the water treatment for a long enough period of time. This may take 30 minutes or 3 days, depending on the burn. The first appearance of the burn can be misleading. Sometimes it doesn't look as bad as it really is until the third or fourth day. What the burn looks like then depends on what you did right after the burn and how quickly you did it. If the burn was cooled down immediately there might be almost no pain or swelling and very little change in the skin's appearance.

If the pain is still there when the injured area returns to normal body temperature, it means further cold water treatment is necessary. As long as the burned area feels warmer to the touch than the surrounding skin area, treatment should be continued.

Most of us have experienced at least one painful burn in our lives, and chances are that we will experience it again. Remembering this simple, effective first aid treatment is an easy way to relieve the discomfort of a burn and prevent lasting burn damage.

*This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.*

For more information on this topic, please contact Alliant Risk Control Consulting at (949) 260-5042 or [riskcontrol@alliant.com](mailto:riskcontrol@alliant.com)

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