Types of Burns

Burn injuries involve the destruction of the integumentary system and are classified by the depth of skin destruction. While burns continue to be defined by degrees: first, second, third, and fourth degree, the American Burn Association recommends a more precise description.



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Superficial Thickness
Super-fish
Superficial thickness burns, sometimes referred to as first degree burns, includes damage to the outer layer of the skin (the epidermis). These burns are usually characterized by redness, pain, moderate to severe tenderness, and no blisters.

Sunburn
Sun
A sunburn is the most common reason for a superficial thickness burn. Healing usually occurs in 3-5 days, as the epithelium peels away from the healthy skin.

Superficial Partial Thickness
Partial Super-fish
Superficial partial thickness burns, one of two types classified as a second degree, involves damage to the epidermis and upper layers of the dermis. Wound may be pink, red, or wet appearing. They are often painful and healing should occur around 10-21 days.

Blisters
Blister
Blisters are characteristic of superficial partial thickness burns. Advise patients not to break the blisters as this can lead to infection.

Blanching
Bleach
Superficial partial thickness burns will blanch (temporary whitening of skin) when pressure is applied.

Deep Partial Thickness
Partial Deep-diver
Deep partial thickness burns, the second type of second degree, involves damage to the entire epidermis and most of the dermis. Unlike superficial partial thickness, these burns will appear dry and can be red or white. Sensation may be present, but is often diminished. Skin grafting may be necessary to heal.

Little or Non-blanching
Little Nun-bleach
Blanching of the skin is often sluggish or absent in deep partial thickness burns.

Full Thickness
Full Glass
Full thickness burns, previously referred to as third-degree burns, involve damage to all layers of the skin, possibly extending into subcutaneous tissue. Involvement of muscles, tendons, and bones is even more severe and is sometimes referred to as a deep full thickness or fourth degree burn. Surgical intervention is often required for healing.

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Waxy White, Yellow or Black

Waxy-candle with white, yellow and black wax

Skin can appear waxy white, yellow, or black. The texture of the skin may appear leathery.

Decreased Pain

Down-arrow Pain-bolt

There is often decreased or no pain sensation due to nerve destruction.

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