

Activity worksheet: Burns

This worksheet is aimed at teachers or educators for first aid activities in schools. It can be used with children and teenagers (please see the [educational pathway](#) for children for more information). Background information are available in this worksheet, but the technical content can be reviewed using the International first aid, resuscitation and education guidelines of the Global first aid reference centre available online [here](#) or the [Basic first aid manual for Africa](#), edited by the Belgian Red Cross, Flanders.

Reflective discussion (sharing experiences)

Objectives:	The students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can recognize a burn • recognize the situations in which people and themselves can get burned
Preparation time:	None
Time for this method:	10 minutes
Aids used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo of a superficial burn (see below) • Photo of an intermediate burn (see below) • Photo of a deep burn (see below)

Procedure:

A lot of people have been burned at some time. There may be students who have seen somebody else with a burn. This means that the young people may already have some prior knowledge on this subject. In this light, preferably use the young people's experiences as a starting point. The following questions can be used to guide the discussion:

- Have you ever had a burn?
- What did the burn look like?
- *Show the photos of the various burns (from pages below). The purpose is that students know how burns can look like. You don't have to name the specific types of burns.*
- What did you do in this case?
- *Ask how the burn happened.*
- Which products/sources can cause burns? *Not only heat can cause burns, but also chemical products, electricity and sun.*
- *Emphasize on safety and prevention:* In which situation do you have to be careful? How can you prevent burns to occur?



Background information - Prevention of burns

- Teach children about household objects that can cause burns and instruct them about the danger of fire.
- Never leave children alone near heat sources, hot water and open fires.
- Install guards around open fires and electric, gas or coal heaters to discourage children from standing too close.
- Never leave food unattended on a stove.
- Turn pot and pan handles toward the back of the stove, so that children cannot accidentally knock them over. Do not leave spoons or other utensils in pots while cooking.



- Avoid wearing loose clothing that could catch fire and keep cooking areas free of flammable objects.
- Keep hot drinks away from young children.
- When bathing, avoid using too hot water. Check the temperature with your elbow.
- Store all matches, lighters and flammable material, such as kerosene (paraffin), safely and out of reach of children (preferably outside the home or living areas).
- Be careful when handling chemical products, as contact with these can result in burns. Always read the instructions and wear protective clothing, such as gloves and safety glasses.







Storytelling

Objectives:	The students <ul style="list-style-type: none">• can recognize a burn• know what to do when someone gets burned
Preparation time:	None
Time for this method:	10 minutes
Aids used:	None

Procedure:

- Read out the story here below. Feel free to change the names of the children to fit your specific context.

The school day has ended. The sisters Janet and Susan walked home together. Mum and dad are not home yet, and are still at work. Janet and Susan are alone at home. Their parents will come home soon. Once they are there, mommy will prepare dinner. "Fortunately", says Janet, "because I'm already very hungry". "Oh, but that's not a problem", says older sister Susan. "We can already prepare something to eat. I think there is still some soup leftover in the kitchen, from yesterday. Maybe we can already eat that?" "Good idea!" says Janet, "now I'm even more hungry!"

Susan removes the soup from the refrigerator and pours it into a saucepan. Vegetable soup, delicious! She makes the fire, and places the saucepan on the fire.

Janet is now emptying her school bag, and sits already ready at the table. "Haha", says Susan, "you are very hurried".

While Janet is sitting at the table, Susan goes to her bedroom. She wants to put on other clothes so that her school uniform does not get dirty. Janet is getting impatient. "I have never had such a big appetite", she thinks. She finds that Susan stays away for a long time. "Would I look at the stove?" Janet stands up and goes to the fire. She cannot get along well. She is just a little too small for that. She tries to gently take the handle of the pan. But oh no! The pan tilts over, and the hot soup flows over her. "Au au au", she calls!

Susan hears her little sister calling. She rushes to the kitchen, and sees Janet sitting on the floor. Janet is crying. She has pain. On her arm is a big red spot ...

What should Susan do?

- What happened?
- What does the injury or wound look like?
- How can you help? What should you do first? *The most important thing to do is to cool the burn with (clean) water for 15-20 minutes, or until it stops hurting.*
- What materials are needed to treat burn?



Demonstration and practice

Objectives:	The students <ul style="list-style-type: none">• can treat a burn appropriately
Preparation time:	None
Time for this method:	10 minutes
Aids used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Running water (or any kind of water)• First-aid materials (disposable gloves or plastic bags, a clean cloth, plasters, etc.)

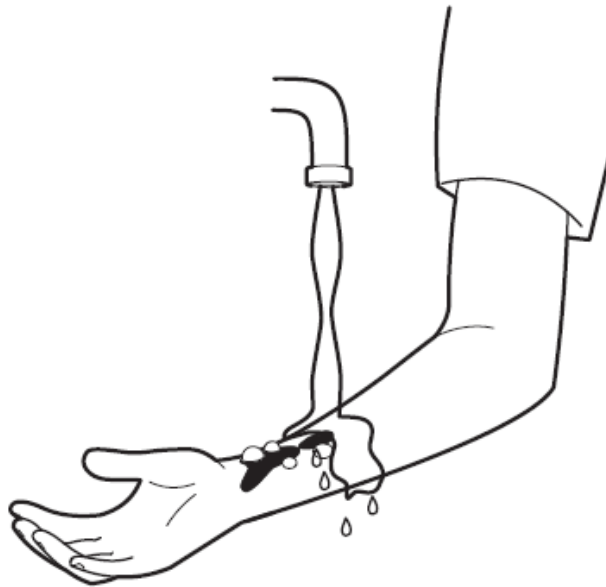
Procedure:

- Demonstrate how to take care of a burn.
- If you like, you could also get the students to practice the technique.



What should you do?

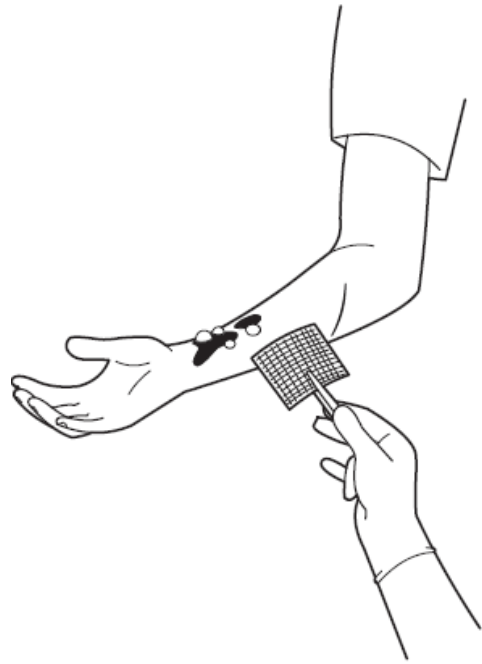
- Seek help.
- If possible, use clean water to cool the burn. Otherwise use any water. Pour cool water on the burn for 15-20 minutes, or until it stops hurting. Even if it hurts less after a while, keep cooling in total for at least 10 minutes. Cooling not only reduces pain, but also prevents a burn from going deeper by taking heat away from the skin.



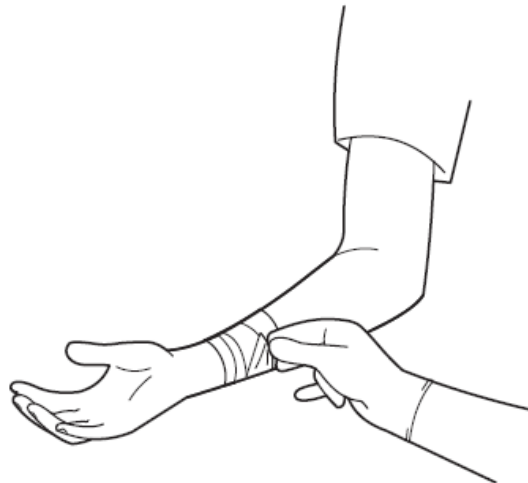
- Put on gloves (or cover your hands with clean plastic bags) to avoid infection.
- Remove any clothing and jewelry, but only if these are not stuck to the skin.



- Cover the burn with a sterile wet wound dressing. Use sterile or clean tweezers to do so. Only use dressings that will not stick to the burn.
- In low resources setting you can put cold liquid honey or aloe vera on the burn. This prevents infection and helps the wound to heal.



- Bandage the dressing to the wound.



- Wash your hands after giving first aid. Use soap (or alternatively, ash).



- Always ask an adult to judge if the wounded person should seek medical help.
- Protect the injured person from hypothermia:
 - Try not to use very cold water during cooling;
 - Protect him or her from the wind and wrap him or her in blankets.
- Do not use toothpaste, creams, oil, butter or soap on burns. They can trap the heat in the burn, causing the burn to be worse, and might cause infections.
- Do not open or break blisters (this creates an open wound vulnerable to infection).
- Keep flies and other insects away from the wound to prevent infection.





Background information - When should you seek medical help?

Minor burns can normally be safely managed at home. However, you must immediately seek medical help if:

- the injured person is under 5 years old or over 65 years old;
- the burn is on the face, ears, hands, feet, the sexual organs or joints;
- the burn circles an entire limb (an arm or a leg), body or neck;
- the burn is equal or larger than the person's hand size;
- the burn looks black, white, papery, hard and dry;
- the injured person has no sense of feeling in the wound;
- the burns were caused by flames, electricity, chemicals or high-pressure steam;
- the injured person has inhaled flames or heat or breathed in a lot of smoke;
- his clothing or jewelry has stuck to burnt skin;
- it is (likely) more than 10 years since his last tetanus injection;
- in the days after, the burn smells bad, is soaked with pus or the injured person gets a fever.

About the Global First Aid Reference Centre

- Founded in 2012
- Centre of excellence of the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) (IFRC) hosted by the [French Red Cross](#)
- Collaborates with 192 National Societies (Red Cross, Red Crescent) as well as scientific, institutional and private partners.

Our objectives are to reduce the number of deaths and the severity of injuries as well as to make people and communities more resilient using first aid. To achieve this, we work closely with National Societies to facilitate knowledge sharing between them and to promote first aid education at the global level. In order to ensure that first aid techniques are relevant to any country and any situation, we participate in numerous studies undertaken by medical doctors, scientists and researchers.

Find out more about the Centre on our [website](#).

