

Patient Information : Burns

Cork Emergency Medicine

EMed.ie

You have what we call a partial thickness burn to your skin.

What to expect

Partial thickness burns are painful, swell and often form blisters within the first 1 to 2 days. Your burn will feel more comfortable if you apply a dressing or barrier ointment (such as Vaseline). Dressings often smell offensive but this alone is not a bad sign. Increasing redness and/or pain will indicate infection. When blisters burst, the burn will leak fluid for few days. Most partial thickness burns take between a few days to two weeks to heal. The scar will be pink, itchy and sensitive to sunlight for a few weeks. It will then gradually fade to near your normal skin colour.

Dos and Don'ts

Do keep the dressing clean and dry.

Do elevate (keep raised) the affected part.

Do gently exercise joints affected by a burn.

Do use Vaseline when dressing is no longer required. This will prevent the scar drying and cracking.

Do use a suncream with a high protection factor if you are exposing your scar to sunlight. You should do this for at least 6 months after the wound has healed.

Don't change the dressing too often, as healing will take longer.

Don't leave wet dressings on your wound, as this will provide a perfect environment for (bacteria) germs to get in and cause infection.

When to seek advice

Contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department, if:

- your wound becomes more painful or you notice increasing redness or swelling
- you notice the scar is thicken or restricts movements

