

# Burns or Scalds

## Caution

Burns and Scalds are caused in a number of different ways. Naked flame, UV radiation, hot liquids, electricity, lightning and chemicals. If the patients clothing has stuck to the burn do not remove it. Major Burns (anything bigger than a 50 cent piece which are deep seated in the tissue) should be classified as a medical emergency and require urgent medical assistance.

## Signs & Symptoms

There are three classifications of burns

- **Superficial** – Damage to the top layer of skin. It will be red, painful and possibly blistered
- **Partial Thickness** – Damage to the underlying skin layers. It will be red, peeling, blistered and swelling
- **Full Thickness Burns** – Includes all layers of the skin and underlying adipose tissue. In some case it can be as deep as the muscles, tendons, bones and organs. The area is usually black or grey and the nerve endings are destroyed so there is little or no pain. Superficial or Partial Thickness burns surrounding the area will be very painful.

## Treatment

- Adhere to DRSABCD
- If the patient's clothing is on fire, get them to stop, drop and cover with a fire blanket or wrap them in something similar. Roll them back and forth on the ground to extinguish any flames. Be careful not to injure yourself or set fire to your clothes
- Cover the burnt area with a sterile non adherent burns dressing
- Remove tight clothing (if not stuck to the patient's body) and jewellery
- Flush any chemicals from the eyes and skin
- Treat for shock
- Burns to the face may cause breathing difficulties
- Depending on severity of burns, immersion time may be as long as 30 minutes.

