

October 1, 2015

Ask the Nurse Practitioner



Treating Minor Burns

Q: My truck was serviced recently, and I noticed an unusual smell through the vent system. After a few hours of driving, I got a headache from it. Should I be concerned?

A: You should see your health care provider, who would evaluate you further to determine if the ventilation may have led to a minor irritation, or whether your lungs might have been affected. You would want to find out what work was recently done to the truck.

Q: I have a first degree burn on my wrist/hand. My doctor seems more concerned with my hand. Why?

A: Because hands come into contact with many objects, preventing infection is a major concern.

Q: Is a friction burn treated like any other burn?

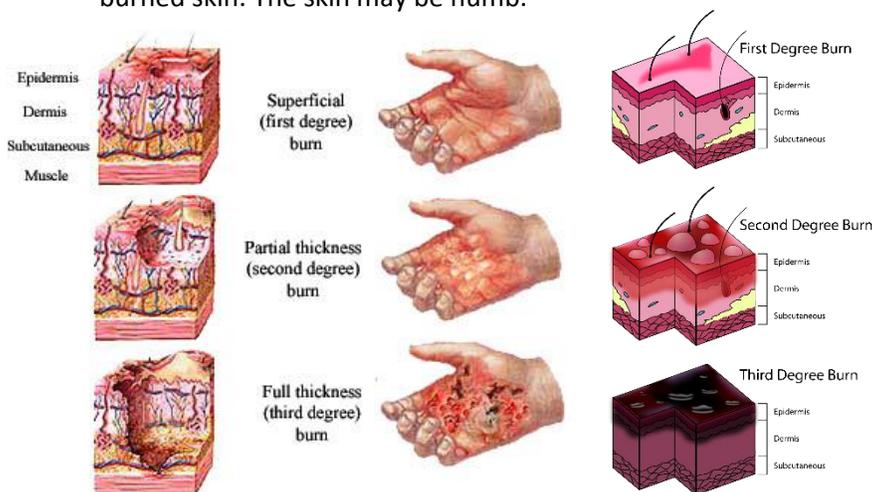
A: A friction burn is typically a first degree burn, and it is managed similarly. It involves a break in the first layer of the skin, requires cleansing and may require a Tetanus shot and antibiotics.

Treating Minor Burns

By Patricia Smith, FNP – Knoxville, TN

A burn is a type of injury to flesh or skin caused by heat, electricity, chemicals, friction, or radiation. You can also burn your airways if you breathe in smoke, steam, superheated air, or chemical fumes in poorly ventilated areas. There are three levels of burns:

- First-degree burns affect only the outer layer of the skin. They cause pain, redness, and swelling.
- Second-degree burns affect both the outer and underlying layer of skin. They cause pain, redness, swelling, and blistering. They are also called partial thickness burns.
- Third-degree burns affect the deep layers of skin. They are also called full thickness burns. They cause white or blackened, burned skin. The skin may be numb.



Treating a Minor Burn

First Degree, Non-Open

- Run cool water over the area of the burn or soak it in a cool water bath (not ice water). Keep the area under water for at least 5 minutes. A clean, cold, wet towel will help reduce pain.
- Remain calm.
- After flushing or soaking the burn, cover it with a dry, sterile bandage or clean dressing.
- Protect the burn from pressure and friction.

Treating Minor Burns article continued on next page

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First Degree, Non-Open (continued)

- Protect the burn from pressure and friction.
- Over-the-counter ibuprofen or acetaminophen can help relieve pain and swelling. No aspirin for children under the age of 12.
- Once the skin has cooled, moisturizing lotion also can help.

First Degree, Open

- Requires evaluation by a health care provider to determine depth of burn.
- The burn will be cleansed in sterile water.
- They burn may require a stronger pain medication. Infection prevention is key - usually antibiotics are prescribed and a Tetanus injection is administered.
- Silvadene burn cream 1% is usually administered until the burn heals.

Inhalation Burns

Symptoms can include voice hoarseness, dizziness, sleepiness, vomiting and difficulty breathing. These types of burns can be caused by the production of combustion and chemical irritants.

Individuals with second, third and inhalation burns are best served at a hospital. Intravenous antibiotics are usually given to prevent infection. Inhalation burns require advanced imaging and testing, and oftentimes medication.

Burns and Infection

Infection is a major concern with burns. Your healthcare provider will evaluate whether antibiotics are required. Burns to the hands, including a friction burn, are sites for infection. Contact your healthcare provider if you notice additional redness, swelling or pus around a burn site.

About UrgentCareTravel

UrgentCareTravel, a network of medical clinics for truckers, is an organization dedicated to improving the health and quality of life of truck drivers and families. In partnership with Pilot Flying J, UrgentCareTravel addresses one of the trucking industry's biggest challenges of offering easily accessible and affordable healthcare services for truck drivers. Located at Pilot Flying J Travel Centers, UrgentCareTravel clinics offer occupational medical services (DOT/non-DOT physicals, workers comp, sleep apnea testing, urine/hair drug screens, etc.) and primary care services (chronic disease screening and management (e.g. diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension), blood pressure checks, Men's & Women's wellness exams, wound care, cold/cough/flu, upper respiratory infections, sinus infections, ear infections, muscle pain/strain, etc.).

UrgentCareTravel's **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** provides members with DOT Physicals and unlimited no deductible / no co-pay visits (in-clinic services) at UrgentCareTravel locations for a low monthly fee. With health insurance plans costing more, providing less medical coverage and requiring higher deductible payments, UrgentCareTravel's **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** is an affordable option to address the healthcare needs of drivers, local businesses and communities. To enroll or request additional information about the **Gold Healthcare Membership Program**, please contact an UrgentCareTravel clinic or send an e-mail to services@urgentcaretravel.com.

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