



Electrical Burns in Adults

GENERAL INFORMATION:

What is it? Electricity (e-lek-trih-sih-t) is what turns on your lights and other things that you plug in. Electricity can be very dangerous if touched. Electrical burns are caused by electricity touching you or passing through your body. Or, you can be burned when electricity jumps from electrical equipment to you. Electricity causes burns on the skin. The burns may be very deep. The electricity may cause damage inside your body as it passes through you. Electricity can hurt the brain, heart, and other organs. How fast you get better depends on how badly you are burned.

Types of burns: There are three kinds of burns:

- First-degree burns include only the outer layer of skin. The skin may be red. The skin may also hurt when touched. These are mild burns and usually heal in a few days.
- Second-degree burns are deeper and more severe. Blisters may form on the burned area. The skin feels very tender when touched. This burn takes about 2 weeks to heal.
- Third-degree burns are the deepest and most dangerous. The skin is tough or leathery. It may look white, brown, black, or red. You may not feel anything when the burned skin is touched.

Causes: Electrical burns may be caused by many things such as sticking a knife into a plugged in toaster. You can also be burned if something that is plugged in (like a radio or hair dryer) is dropped into water. Sucking or chewing on an electrical cord can also cause burns. Sticking things (pins, fingers) into an electrical outlet (plug) can cause an electrical burn.

Signs/Symptoms: You may feel pain and swelling over the area that got burned. Also, you may see redness and blisters. You may have a headache, fever, and feel dizzy.

Care: Always call your caregiver if you get an electrical burn. If the burn is small, you may be able to take care of it at home. Drink 6 to 8 glasses (soda-pop can size) of liquids like water or fruit juice each day. You may also need medicine for pain, swelling, fever, or infection (in-fek-shun). If you have a large burn or you get a shock from the electricity, get to the hospital right away. Do not drive yourself! Call **911 or 0 (operator)** if there is no one to drive you to the hospital.

Do's/Don'ts: To keep from getting electrical burns, do not stick anything into an electrical plug. Do not use electrical equipment near standing or running water. Do **not** put forks or knives into toasters or outlets. Repair or replace any frayed or worn electrical cords.