

Skin Terms
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DEGREE OF BURN	DEFINITION
First Degree (superficial burns)	A superficial burn involves only the top layer of skin, the epidermis. The skin is red and dry and the burn is usually painful. The area may swell.
Second Degree (partial thickness)	A partial thickness burn involves the epidermis and dermis. These injuries are also red and have blisters that may open and weep clear fluid, making the skin appear wet. The burned skin may look blotched. These burns are usually painful and the area often swells.
Third Degree (full thickness)	A full-thickness burn destroys both layers of skin, as well as any or all of the underlying structures - fat, muscles, bones and nerves. These burns may look brown or charred, with the tissues underneath sometimes appearing white. They can be either extremely painful or relatively painless if the burn destroys nerve endings in the skin. Painful edges surround the injury. Pain receptors may exist beneath the edges.
Fourth Degree	A fourth degree burn goes through all the layers of the skin and down into the muscle and bone. It looks like a third degree burn and does great harm to the body structure. Damage extends through deeply charred subcutaneous tissue to muscle and bone.