



# First Aid for a Burn

**What's the first thing I should do if my child is burned?**

**Answer:** Remove any hot, wet clothing unless it is stuck to the skin, at the same time, find cold water or a cold liquid to **immediately cool the skin and any clothing that can't be removed**. *Every second counts!*

**When should I call 911, before or after cooling the burn?**

**Answer:** *After!* Cooling the skin quickly will help reduce the damage and improves the skin's ability to heal.

**How long should I cool the skin for?**

**Answer:**

- To prevent further or deeper damage, cool the burned skin for a minimum of **1 minute** and/or until the skin is cool to touch. Your child will be very upset but cool the skin even if it peels or blisters.
- Cooling the burn for up to 10 or 15 minutes may also help ease your child's pain.
- **If the burn area is larger than the size of several of your child's palms put together, cool for at least 1 minute, and then call for an ambulance.**
- Remember to keep your child warm while cooling only the skin that has been burned to prevent hypothermia..

**What should I put on the burn after I have cooled the skin?**

**Answer:**

If this is a *small burn*, cover with a clean, cool, wet face cloth or gauze. If the burn is on the face, hands, feet or groin, large blisters develop or the burn is larger than the size of a loonie or one inch in diameter your child's burn should be assessed by the family doctor. If the injury happens outside office hours, go to your nearest emergency department.

- If this is a *large burn*, the size of several of your child's palms put together, **cool for 1 minute**, then cover with a clean dry sheet or towel and call for an ambulance. **NEVER** put butter, toothpaste, cream, oil or ice on a burn.

### **Why shouldn't I put ice on a burn?**

#### **Answer:**

The damaged skin needs blood flow in order to heal and repair. Putting ice on the skin causes the blood vessels to constrict and reduces the blood flow to the area.

### **My mother always told me to put butter on a burn.**

#### **Answer:**

Butter and other home remedies don't have any known benefits and may contain bacteria or inflame and irritate the burn. Also, if your child requires medical treatment, these products will have to be removed so the skin can be properly assessed, and that can be painful.

### **Should I drive to the doctors or hospital myself or call an ambulance?**

#### **Answer:**

If this is a large burn, call an ambulance *after* you have cooled the burn.

If this is a smaller burn and you are alone, have a family member, neighbour or friend drive *after* you have cooled the burn so you can give your child your full attention, otherwise call for an ambulance.

### **What should I do if this is a minor burn?**

#### **Answer:**

1. Cool the burn with cold water or cover with a cold cloth for 10-15 minutes.
2. Then, apply a mild first aid ointment and band-aid to protect the skin.
3. Wash the area with mild soap and water and apply a new band-aid and ointment every day.
4. If the skin becomes red, painful or you see pus, see a doctor.