



KAISER PERMANENTE®

EMERGENCY  
DEPARTMENT

# Burn Care

## After-Care Instructions

### Caring for a burn after a visit to the Emergency Department

- If the burn is on your arm or lower leg, elevate the burn area above the level of the heart to help decrease some of the pain during the first few days.
- If the bandage is clean and dry, leave it on for 2 days. If fluid has soaked through the bandage, remove it after 1 day. Always wash your hands first; then gently remove the bandage. If the bandage sticks, soak it in warm water.
- After removing the bandage, wash the burn in warm, soapy water using a clean washcloth to remove old ointment and dead skin. Pat dry, then cover the whole burn with a thin coating of antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin™, Polymixin™).
- Change the bandage once a day (more if the wound soaks through the bandages).
- Do not put aloe vera or other home remedies on a new burn. Wait until new skin has formed.
- Aspirin can decrease burn pain. Ibuprofen (Advil™, Motrin™), Naproxen (Aleve™, Naprosyn™) or acetaminophen (Tylenol™) also can be used. Do not use these together with prescription pain medication unless you have checked with the pharmacist or doctor.

- A recent burn area can get easily sunburned, so try to keep it covered or use sunblock with at least SPF 30.
- First and second degree burns usually do not scar, but it takes months for normal skin color to return.

### When to call Kaiser Permanente



- If the pain increases after 2 days.
- If there is swelling, redness or tenderness spreading out around the burn area.
- If red streaks extend up the arm or leg from the burn area.
- If you have a fever over 101°F.
- If pus develops on the burn area.
- If there are problems with burn care or you need help changing the bandages.

### Other instructions (if needed):

If you think you have an emergency medical condition and you cannot safely go to a plan hospital, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

For information on this and over 180 other health topics, see your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise® Handbook*. If you need a copy, please call 1-800-464-4000.

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