

Pathway for Burns First Aid

According to the British Burn Association (BBA) "The prompt and effective application of burns first aid has been shown to positively impact on the burn outcome, preventing further tissue damage and reducing subsequent morbidity" (BBA, 2018).

This 3 step guide gives details of how to apply safe and effective first aid following a thermal burn.

1 STOP the burning process

Once safe to do so remove the person/s from the source of the burn.

2 Remove clothing and jewellery

- Remove any burned/contaminated/ damp/ constricting clothing if able to do so- leaving any molten/adherent clothing.
- Remove any nappies, jewellery and contact lenses near burned area if able to do so.

3 Cool the Burn and Warm the Patient

- Do not delay cooling- if running water available - cool the burn immediately with cool running water for 20 minutes up to 3 hours post injury.
- If water supply is limited- apply a cool water compress using a clean wetted lint free cloth, changing compress frequently over 20 minute period.
- If no water available, cover burn with cling film and cool at first opportunity within 3 hours after injury.
- Do not use iced water or ice to cool burns.
- Keep patient warm to prevent hypothermia (children and elderly most susceptible). Cover non-burned areas during cooling and continue to warm throughout care interventions.