

Recognising burn depths

August 2024

Epidermal burn (erythema)

- Damage to epidermis only
 - skin intact, no blisters present
- Red
- Brisk capillary refill
- Heals spontaneously in 3-7 days with moisturiser or protective dressing



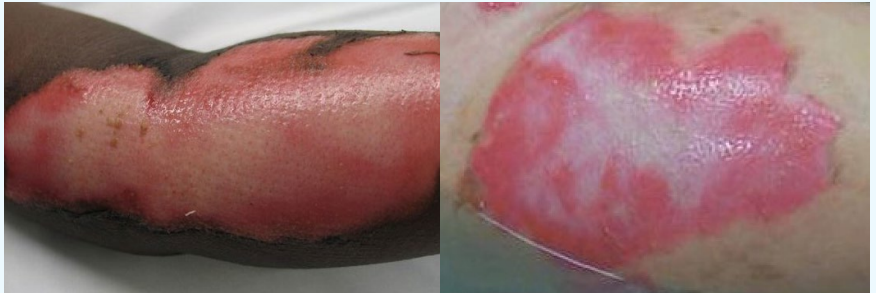
Superficial dermal burn

- Damage to upper layer of dermis
 - blisters present or absent
- Pink
- Brisk capillary refill (under blister)
- Should heal in 7-10 days with minimal dressing requirements



Mid dermal burn

- Damage into mid dermis
- Dark pink
- Sluggish capillary refill
- Should heal within 14 days.
- Deeper areas may need surgical intervention and referral



Deep dermal burn

- Burn extends into the deeper layers of the dermis, but not through the entire dermis
- Blotchy red/white
- Sluggish to absent capillary refill
- Generally needs surgical intervention
- Refer to specialist burn unit



Full thickness burn

- Entire destruction of dermis, sometimes underlying tissue involved
- White, waxy, brown, black.
- No capillary refill
- Surgical intervention and long-term scar management required
- Refer to specialist burn unit

