Electrical Burns

What is it?

> A skin burn that occurs when the body comes in contact with electricity.

Symptoms:

- Burn or other injury to the skin
- Confusion, dizziness, or headache
- Heart pounding or fluttering
- Muscle contractions
- Numbness or tingling
- Problems with balance
- Red or re-black urine
- Seizures
- Shortness of breath
- Trouble staying awake

Plan of Action:

For minor electrical burns:

- Put a cool wet cloth on the area
- Do not break any blisters
- After you gently clean the skin, put a bandage on the area

When to contact your doctor:

> A person who has been injured by contact with electricity should be seen by a health care provider. The damage may be worse than it looks from the burn on the skin. Sometimes an electrical injury can cause damage to skin, muscles, blood vessels and nerves, often in an arm or a leg. The heart, brain and other body organs can be damaged.

Caution

- Don't touch the injured person if the person is still in contact with the electrical current.
- Call 911 or your local emergency number if the source of the burn is a high-voltage wire or lightning. Don't get near high-voltage wires until the power is turned off. Overhead power lines usually aren't insulated. Stay at least 50 feet (about 15 meters) away — farther if wires are jumping and sparking.
- Don't drive over downed power lines. If a live electrical line contacts the vehicle you're in, stay in the vehicle. Call 911 or your local emergency number to disable the power line before touching any metal to try to exit the vehicle.

- Don't move a person with an electrical injury unless the person is in immediate danger.

When to seek emergency care:

Call 911 or your local emergency number if the injured person experiences:

- Severe burns
- Confusion
- Difficulty breathing
- Irregular heart rhythm (arrhythmias)
- Does not have a pulse and is not breathing (cardiac arrest)
- Muscle pain and contractions
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

Take these actions immediately while waiting for medical help:

- Turn off the source of electricity if possible. If not, move the source away from both you and the injured person. Use a dry, nonconducting object made of cardboard, plastic or wood.
- Begin CPR if the person is not breathing, coughing or moving and doesn't have a pulse.

- Do not remove clothing or try to clean the burned area. Cover any burned areas with a sterile gauze bandage, if available, or a clean cloth or sheet. Don't use a blanket or towel, because fuzz or loose fibers can stick to the burns.

- Try to prevent the injured person from becoming chilled.

Revision #3
Created 2023-03-06 15:09:54 UTC
Updated 2023-04-07 14:51:31 UTC