

Epidermal burn (erythema)

- damage to epidermis only; skin intact, no blisters present
- erythema; red
- brisk capillary refill
- heals spontaneously within 3–7 days with moisturiser or protective dressing.



Superficial dermal burn

- damage to upper layer of dermis
- pink; blisters present or absent
- brisk capillary refill (under blister)
- should heal within 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 deeper layers of dermis, but not through entire dermis
- blotchy red/white
- sluggish to absent capillary refill
- generally needs surgical intervention
- refer to specialist unit.



Full thickness burn

- destruction of entire dermis; sometimes underlying tissue involved
- white, waxy, cherry red, brown, black
- no capillary refill
- surgical intervention and long-term scar management required
- refer to specialist unit.

