

BURN DEPTH CLASSIFICATION

1. First-degree burns are usually red, dry, and painful. Burns initially termed first-degree are often actually superficial second-degree burns, with sloughing occurring the next day.
2. Second-degree burns are often red, wet, and very painful. Their depth, ability to heal, and propensity to form hypertrophic scars vary enormously.
3. Third-degree burns are generally leathery in consistency, dry, insensate, and waxy. These wounds will not heal, except by contraction and limited epithelial migration, with resulting hypertrophic and unstable cover. Burn blisters can cover both second- and third-degree burns. The management of burn blisters remains controversial, yet intact blisters help greatly with pain control.
4. Fourth-degree burns involve underlying subcutaneous tissue, tendon or bone.