

What Part of Your Body Are You Willing To Sacrifice?

The total area of the burn is significant, as well as the depth of the burn. Burns are measured as a percentage of total body area affected. The **"rule of nines"** is often used. This calculation is based upon the fact that the surface area of the following parts of an adult body each correspond to approximately 9% of total.

Only second and third degree areas are added together to measure total body burn area. While first degree burns are painful, the skin integrity is intact and it is able to do its job with fluid and temperature maintenance.

As the percentage of burn surface area increases, the risk of death increases as well. Patients with burns involving less than 20% of their body should do well, but those with burns involving greater than 50% have a significant mortality risk, depending upon a variety of factors, including underlying medical conditions and age.

Burn location is an important consideration. If the burn involves the face, nose, mouth or neck, there is a risk that there will be enough inflammation and swelling to obstruct the airway and cause breathing problems. Work-related burns account for 20%-25% of all serious burns requiring hospital attention. Workplace burn injuries account for about 5% of all workplace deaths. In nonfatal workplace injuries from burns, most damage is done to the skin. Skin is the body's largest sensory organ and necessary for the regulation of water and warmth. It is also one of the first organs noticed by others. Burned skin and respiratory damage can permanently affect a worker's quality of life.

Additional burn injury can be caused from smoke inhalation. In fact, 60-80% of burn fatalities come from major smoke inhalation. The immediate effects can include fainting, blockages of airways, singed facial and/or nose hair, and burns around the face and neck. Smoke inhalation can also lead to pulmonary (lung) injury. There are also the immediate and long-term dangers from inhaling toxic chemicals such as benzene.

Workplace fires and explosions kill 200 and injure more than 5,000 American workers each year, according to OSHA estimates. Not all workplace-related burns result from fires. Thermal burns can also occur from contact with hot objects present in many workplaces, and electrical, radiation, and chemical burns are dangers facing many American workers, both those out in the field and those inside factories, laboratories, and other workplaces.

Workplace burns can result in catastrophic pain and physical disfigurement. Burn injuries are some of the most expensive and painful injuries an employee can suffer. The average cost for medical bills is almost twice that for any other injury. They often require long-term hospitalization, skin grafts, and reconstructive surgery. As a result, burn injuries are often some of the most expensive and painful injuries to treat.

A search on the internet regarding the average cost of a burn injury suggests reported hospital costs ranging from roughly \$50,000 up to \$700,000. Since serious burn injuries require surgery, pain medication, skin grafts, and physical therapy, it can take months if not years for a full recovery.

Burn Percentage in Adults: Rule of Nines

