


# Burn Depth Characteristics

## CONTACT DETAILS

 Alfred Hospital  
The Alfred **1800 ALFRED**

 The Royal **Children's**  
Hospital Melbourne  
**(03) 9345 5522**  
Contact: Burn Registrar

	Superficial Epidermal eg sunburn '1 <sup>st</sup> degree'	Superficial Dermal Thickness (partial) '2 <sup>nd</sup> degree'	Mid Dermal Thickness (partial) '2 <sup>nd</sup> degree'	Deep Dermal Thickness (partial) '2 <sup>nd</sup> degree'	Full Thickness '3 <sup>rd</sup> degree'
					
<b>PATHOLOGY</b>	Involves epidermis only	Involves epidermis and upper dermis, most adnexal structures intact	↔	Involves epidermis and significant part of dermis, only deeper adnexal structures intact	Epidermis, dermis and cell adnexal structures destroyed
<b>APPEARANCE</b>	Dry and red, blanches to pressure. No blisters.	Pale pink. Smaller blisters. Wound base blanches with pressure.	↔	Blotchy red or pale deeper dermis where blisters have ruptured	White waxy charred. No blisters. No capillary refill
<b>SENSATION</b>	Maybe painful	Increased sensation  Very painful and tender	↔	Decreased sensation	No sensation
<b>CIRCULATION</b>	Normal, increased	Hyperaemic  Rapid capillary refill.	↔	Sluggish capillary refill	Nil
<b>COLOUR</b>	Red, warm	Pink	↔	White/Pale pink/ Blotchy red	White/Charred/ Black
<b>BLISTERS</b>	None or (days) later or desquamation	Yes (within hours of injury)	↔	Early—usually large blisters which rupture rapidly and slough	Epidermis & dermis destroyed, no blistering
<b>HEALING TIME</b>	Within seven days	7-14 days	↔	Over 21 days	Does not heal spontaneously
<b>SCARRING</b>	No scar	Colour match defect. Low risk of hypertrophic scarring	↔	High risk (up to 80%) hypertrophic scarring	Wound contraction  Heals by secondary intention

↔ In the range between Superficial Dermal Thickness (partial) '2<sup>nd</sup> degree' and Deep Dermal Thickness (partial) '2<sup>nd</sup> degree'