

# Holiday kitchen accident? Here's how to treat minor cuts, burns

December 12 2022, by Cara Murez



From burns to cuts, kitchen accidents happen, and they may be more

likely as you cook for holiday gatherings.

Treating those injuries quickly and effectively can help begin the healing process and may reduce scarring, according to a [skin](#) expert at the American Academy of Dermatology.

"Whenever your skin is injured—whether by accident or from surgery—your body works to repair the wound. As your skin heals, a scar may form, as this is a natural part of the [healing process](#)," said [Dr. Lindsay Strowd](#), associate professor and interim chair of dermatology at Wake Forest School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C.

"The appearance of a scar often depends on how well the wound heals," she said in an academy news release. "If you have minor cuts or scrapes, you can help reduce the appearance of a scar by properly treating the injury at home."

First-degree burns can occur after accidentally touching a hot stove or oven or from a mishap with holiday decorations. This only involves the top layer of skin, unlike the more severe second- or third-degree [burns](#).

You may experience mild swelling and your skin may be red and painful.

"If you get a minor, first-degree burn, it's important to treat it right away," Strowd said. "Not only can a first-degree burn be very painful, but it can leave a [scar](#) if not properly treated."

Start by cooling the burn by immersing it in cool tap water or applying cold, wet compresses until the pain subsides.

Do not apply ointments, toothpaste, butter or topical antibiotics to the burn. Instead use petroleum jelly two to three times daily, Strowd recommended.

Cover the burn with a nonstick, sterile bandage. Do not pop any blisters that may form. Let them heal while keeping the area covered.

Protect your burn from the sun while it is healing by keeping it moist and covered with a nonstick bandage or gauze with paper tape. After it heals, you can prevent further scarring by wearing broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.

If the burn is large or severe or happens to an infant or older adult, go to an emergency room immediately.

Cuts are another common kitchen accident.

"Cuts from a sharp knife or a piece of glass are very common and often occur while people are preparing food, washing dishes or even crafting," Strowd said. "All it takes is a slip of the knife or a dish breaking. While these types of cuts are startling, most can be safely treated at home."

To treat a minor cut, stop the bleeding by applying pressure with a clean washcloth or gauze for a minute or two or until the bleeding stops.

Wash your hands and the wound with mild soap and cool or warm water. Strowd advised.

Applying [petroleum jelly](#) to the wound will help keep it moist for faster healing. Do not apply topical antibiotics.

Use a sterile bandage to cover the cut, preventing it from reopening. Change this bandage daily until it heals.

If your cut is from a dirty or rusty object, make sure your tetanus vaccination is up to date. If you aren't sure, contact your primary care doctor.

Seek immediate medical attention if your cut is longer than three-fourths of an inch, more than a quarter-inch deep or won't stop bleeding Strowd said.

**More information:** The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more on [burns](#).

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