

The Morning After the Night Before: Campfires Revisited

Mechanism of Injury:

Most are caused by children walking on hot embers rather than a fire. Often it occurs the morning after the campfire has been considered to be extinguished. The hot embers are hidden by the dangerous practice of covering the embers with sand or dirt. Our studies have shown that campfires will retain enough heat even after 8 hours to cause a full-thickness burn to a child with less than one second contact time. Extinguishing a camp fire with water will render it harmless within 10 minutes.

Data:

In the six years from 1997 to 2002, 1633 children were treated for burns at the Royal Children's Hospital.

- 5-7% of all burns were from campfires
- Average age: 2 1/2 years
- Male : Female = 1:1
- 89% were supervised by an adult
- Area of body most affected: Feet and Hands
- 24% required skin grafting
- 61% required long term scar management
- 6% required further surgery for chronic scarring

Prevention Message:

- When finished with a campfire extinguish it with water
- Never cover a campfire with sand or dirt

PREVENTION



Apply water over campfire

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