

# Nearly half of Americans lack knowledge of burn injuries and treatment

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Summertime means Americans are spending more time around grills, firepits, and fireworks, increasing their risk for fire-related burn injuries. While 53% of Americans say they know some or a lot about burn injuries and treatment, many mistakenly underestimate their risks with these activities, according to a new Arizona Burn Center at Valleywise Health/Ipsos survey. In fact, only 11% know that fire-flame injuries such as those from a firepit or grill are the most common types of burn injuries.

"Burn injuries increase in the [summer months](#) as more people are grilling outside, sitting around firepits, and setting off [fireworks](#)," said Kevin Foster, MD, director of Burn Services for the Arizona Burn Center at Valleywise Health. "It's important for people to be aware of not only their risk for suffering from a burn injury, but what to do if they or a loved one experience a burn."

The online survey of 1,000 adults conducted in June by Ipsos, a multinational independent market research firm, shows that a majority of Americans are unaware that applying ice to a burn is not

recommended. Nearly six in 10 either think you should immediately apply ice directly to a burn (39%) or do not know whether it is okay (18%), when doing so can actually increase [tissue damage](#).

Additionally, 40% of Americans say they are planning to use their own fireworks or sparklers this summer, activities that put a significant number of people at risk for serious burns. Children are particularly at risk because parents are more likely than the general population to report they will be around fire hazards, including fireworks (65.8% vs. 40%), and firepits or campfires (65% vs. 50%). Additionally, of those parents planning to use or be around fireworks, half (50%) say they don't know much or anything at all about [burn injuries](#) and treatments.

Lack of knowledge can be especially dangerous around grills, as they account for thousands of visits to the emergency room every year. Seventy-one percent of respondents say they are planning to grill this summer, but one in four incorrectly thinks water is the best way to put out a grill fire. Additionally, while nearly two-thirds (59%) of parents who plan to grill this summer know it is not okay to put out a grill fire with water, 41% falsely think it is okay or don't know. "Burns are one of the leading causes of [injury](#)-related death in children, so the lack of knowledge that Americans demonstrate around burn injuries is concerning," said Dr. Foster. "People need to be aware of the dangers, even with something as common as grilling, so that they are prepared to react appropriately and safely in an emergency. I encourage anyone planning to grill or use a firepit or fireworks this summer to review basic safety measures for these activities and understand what to do if someone experiences a burn."

If you plan to use or be around a grill, firepit, fireworks, or sparklers this summer, here are just a few tips to help keep you and your family safe:

- When grilling, cook your food in batches to avoid overloading the grill, particularly with fatty meats that can cause a flare-up.
- If you are faced with a grill fire, use a [fire extinguisher](#) to put out the flames, not water.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area at all times.
- If the flame goes out on your gas grill, turn the [grill](#) and gas off and wait at least 5 minutes before re-lighting.
- Fire pits should be placed at a minimum of ten feet away from your house.
- Store matches and lighters out of children's sight and reach.
- Use a metal screen over wood-burning firepits to keep sparks and embers contained.
- When using fireworks or sparklers, keep a supply of water or fire extinguisher at hand.
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands and never use fireworks while impaired by alcohol.
- Instead of sparklers, consider using safer alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers.

If you or someone with you experiences a burn, please seek immediate medical attention if the burn is larger than your palm; it covers your hands, joints, or face; if the pain progressively gets worse; or if the skin is peeling. For more information on burn safety, please visit The Arizona Burn Center's website:

<https://valleywisehealth.org/patient-education-resource/burn-care-patient-education/>

Provided by Valleywise Health

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