

# Elliot Hospital: Ask the Pediatric Surgeon



Dear Dr. Soukup,  
My 16 month old son touched a wood stove this weekend and burned his hand. We brought him to an ER where they bandaged it up, but will this leave a scar? -Michelle S.



Dear Michelle,

The burn that you describe is probably one of the most common burns that we see in children. It frequently occurs in this toddler age group as they become more mobile and inquisitive. When the palm of their hand touches a hot surface, it is usually a very brief exposure because they reflexively move their hand off the surface very quickly. The skin on the surface of the palm is also quite thick. For these reasons, most burns to the palm of the hand are partial thickness burns and will heal nicely with good care. We typically describe burns by the depth of injured skin: First degree burns only involve the top layer of skin (called the epidermis). The classic example for this is a sunburn. Second-degree or partial-thickness burns involve the deeper layers of skin (called the dermis) and take longer to heal. Although the skin has blistered and looks red and raw, many of these

will heal without any scar. That said, the deeper the burn, the more likely it may heal with at least some scarring. The most severe burn is a third-degree, or full-thickness burn which will need a skin graft to heal properly. These full thickness burns and those involving larger areas of skin, need to be treated in a designated pediatric burn center. The vast majority, however, I care for locally as an outpatient. I will usually see children soon after their visit to the ER to examine the burn, educate families on caring for the burn with antibiotic ointments and clean dressings, and follow them through until healing. Understandably, parents feel terrible that this happened to their toddler, but it is very common and they usually heal up very well. Thanks for your question!

-Dr. Soukup

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#askthepediatricsurgeon



## Elizabeth S. Soukup, M.D., M.M.Sc. Pediatric Surgeon

Dr. Soukup is a Pediatric Surgeon at the Elliot Hospital and has an interest in educating families about pediatric health and wellness. Her mission is to provide expert specialty care for children of all ages in New Hampshire – newborns through teenagers – striving to keep them close to their families and communities. If you would like more information, call 603-663-8393 for an appointment, or visit our website at <http://elliott-hospital.org/website/pediatric-surgery.php>. Check out her previous articles at #askthepediatricsurgeon.

Dr. Soukup earned her Bachelor of Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and her Doctor of Medicine from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, where she received the Outstanding Achievement Award in Medicine, graduating first in her class. She completed her General Surgery training at the Massachusetts General Hospital and her fellowship in Pediatric Surgery at Children's Hospital Boston. During her time in Boston, she also completed a Masters of Medical Sciences degree in clinical investigation

from Harvard Medical School. She was awarded Elliot Hospital's "Physician of the year" for 2018. She is board-certified in both Pediatric Surgery and General Surgery. She has specialized training and experience in minimally invasive surgical treatment for babies, children and teenagers. Her practice includes all areas of general pediatric surgery, including common pediatric surgical problems as well as neonatal surgery, congenital anomalies, minimally invasive surgery, and complex thoracic surgical problems.

Please send your questions to:  
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