



## How to Treat Minor Beauty Injuries

No beauty routine should end with a trip to the emergency room. Here's how to handle little beauty mishaps without the assistance of an M.D.

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**What Happened:** You singed yourself with a curling iron.

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**The Injury:** A first-degree burn.

**The Rx:** Treat it as you would any first-degree burn. “Wrap ice in a paper towel or a thin cloth and apply it to the burn right away to cool down the temperature of the skin,” says Carolyn Jacob, an associate clinical instructor of dermatology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, in Chicago. Next, apply a 1 percent hydrocortisone cream to the burned area. At night, use a gentle cleanser (like Cetaphil) to wash the burned skin, and afterward apply a moisturizing ointment (such as Aquaphor). Keep the area covered with a bandage. Take ibuprofen or aspirin if you’re in pain. If the burn starts to blister or develops pus, see a doctor.

**Quick Camouflage:** Try some creative hairstyling. Side-swept bangs can cover a spot on your forehead, while a low side ponytail works for a burn on your neck.

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**What Happened:** A new face cream made your skin itchy and irritated.

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**The Injury:** Contact dermatitis. Your skin could be reacting to an ingredient in the product.

**The Rx:** Wash off the cream immediately with a mild, fragrance-free soap. Apply a 1 percent hydrocortisone cream. You can also use a cool washcloth to soothe inflammation and take an oral antihistamine (like Benadryl) to reduce itching, says Mary P. Lupo, a clinical professor of dermatology at Tulane University, in New Orleans. Pare back on other skin-care products until the irritation subsides. If your skin starts to blister or flake, see your doctor; you may need a prescription for oral steroids or a cortisone shot.

**Quick Camouflage:** Pick up a mineral-powder foundation to use instead of your regular base. This kind of foundation tends to be gentler and is less likely to irritate.

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**What Happened:** You poked yourself in the eye with a mascara wand.

**The Injury:** A corneal abrasion, or scratch to the cornea. This can be a portal for bacteria to enter the eye and cause an infection.

**The Rx:** Use a few drops of a lubricating eyedrop (such as TheraTears or Optive) to flush out any makeup that may still be in the eye. “This helps wash away inflammatory chemicals produced by the body (which can make the eye red and puffy),” says Marguerite McDonald, M.D., a cornea specialist with Ophthalmic Consultants of Long Island. Then apply a zipper-sealed bag of ice wrapped in a paper towel to the lid. For pain or blurry vision that doesn’t improve in 12 to 24 hours, see an ophthalmologist.

**Quick Camouflage:** “Use one drop of an eye-whitening product, like Visine,” says McDonald. (Don’t go overboard. If used regularly, these drops can cause rebound redness.)

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**What Happened:** After a pedicure, your nails look discolored.

**The Injury:** A fungal infection. Fungal infections produce a diffuse yellowish or white discoloration and can cause nails to separate from the nail beds or become thick and start to crumble.

**The Rx:** Trim your nails short. Apply an antifungal cream (such as Lamisil or Lotrimin) on the tops, under the edges, and around the cuticles of the infected nails, says Stephen Mandy, a dermatologist in South Miami Beach, Florida. If these measures don’t help after a month, see your doctor. She may prescribe an oral antifungal drug or a clear medicated nail polish called Penlac, which you apply daily until the infected area grows out completely, says dermatology instructor Carolyn Jacob.

**Quick Camouflage:** Apply colored lacquer for a big night out. But remove it the next day and go right back to your nail treatment.

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**What Happened:** You exfoliated too vigorously and your skin is red and raw.

**The Injury:** A disruption of the skin’s barrier layer. You removed not only dead skin cells on top but also healthy cells underneath.

**The Rx:** Apply cool washcloths for a few minutes. Then apply a thick, bland, soothing moisturizer (such as Vanicream) to calm the area. Avoid creams with fragrance or exfoliating ingredients, as they can sting and burn already sensitized skin. Stick with a gentle cleanser for a few days, and avoid the sun. “Let the skin heal before you wear makeup or put anything containing chemicals on it,” dermatology professor Roberta Sengelmann says. If the redness and the irritation worsen or if they don’t go away in a week, see a dermatologist.

**Quick Camouflage:** Use a small amount of a nonirritating, green-tinted moisturizer, as green lessens red tones. (Try Eucerin Redness Relief Daily Perfecting Lotion SPF 15.)

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**What Happened:** You tore off a hangnail and your finger is bleeding.

**The Injury:** A deep rip in the skin. This can lead to paronychia, an inflammation of the skin surrounding the edge of the nail, and possibly to infection.

**The Rx:** To prevent infection and soothe soreness, soak the finger in a solution of one teaspoon white vinegar and four ounces warm water for three to five minutes, suggests Ronald R. Brancaccio, a clinical professor of dermatology at the New York University School of Medicine, in New York City. Do this twice a day for three to seven days. After soaking, apply a topical antibiotic ointment and a bandage to protect the area. If you develop swelling or a puslike discharge after 48 hours, see a dermatologist.

**Quick Camouflage:** Apply a dab of liquid invisible bandage to form a protective barrier over the wound.

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