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Electrical Injuries

Also called: Electric shock, Electrical burn

When you come in direct contact with electricity, it can pass through your body and cause injuries. These electrical injuries can be external or internal. You may have one or both types. External injuries are skin burns [<https://medlineplus.gov/burns.html>]. Internal injuries include damage to your organs, bones, muscles, and nerves. You could also have abnormal heart rhythms [<https://medlineplus.gov/arrhythmia.html>] and sudden cardiac arrest [<https://medlineplus.gov/suddencardiaccarrest.html>] (SCA).

How bad your injuries are depends on how strong the electric current was, what type of current it was, how it moved through your body, and how long you were exposed. Other factors include how healthy you are, and how quickly you get treatment.

Causes of electrical injuries include:

- Lightning strikes
- Faulty electrical appliances
- Work-related exposures
- Contact with household wiring or power lines
- Accidents in small children, when they bite or suck on electrical cords, or stick objects in outlets

If you get an electrical injury, you should see a doctor. You may have internal damage and not realize it.

Learn More

- Electric Shock Injuries in Children [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Electric-Shock.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/paginas/electric-shock.aspx>]
- Electrical Burns: First Aid [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-electrical-burns/basics/ART-20056687?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/first-aid/first-aid-electrical-burns/basics/art-20056687?p=1>]
- Electrical Shock: First Aid [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-electrical-shock/basics/art-20056695?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/first-aid/first-aid-electrical-shock/basics/art-20056695?p=1>]
- Home Electrical Safety Checklist [<https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/513.pdf>] (Consumer Product Safety Commission) - **PDF**
- Lightning and Your Safety [<https://www.cdc.gov/lightning/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/es/disasters/lightning/index.html>]
- Lightning Injuries [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/injuries-and-poisoning/electrical-and-lightning-injuries/lightning-injuries>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/traumatismos-y-envenenamientos/lesiones-causadas-por-electricidad-y-rayos/lesiones-por-rayos>]
- Lightning Safety Tips and Resources [<https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning>] (National Weather Service)

What to Do to Protect Yourself from Electrical Hazards [<https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/response/what-to-do-protect-yourself-from-electrical-hazards.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/es/response/que-hacer-para-protegerse-de-peligros-electricos.html>]

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Results of microbiological surveillance in patients with high-voltage electrical injuries: A... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40747749>]
- Article: Electrical Burns: A Retrospective Study at the Lebanese Burn Center in... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40713019>]
- Article: Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest secondary to electrocution: Characteristics and outcomes. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40602479>]
- Electrical Injuries -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Burns%2C+Electric%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Electric+Injuries%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29>]

Patient Handouts

- Electrical injury [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000053.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000053.htm>]



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