1. Assessing body surface area burnt

1.1 Rule of nines

The “Rule of Nines” divides the body surface into areas of nine percent (%) or multiples of nine percent, with the exception that the perineum is estimated at one percent (%). This allows the extent of the burn to be estimated with reproducible accuracy.

Children have different body surface area proportions: Use the Paediatric Rule of Nines and adjust for age by taking 1% TBSA from the head and adding ½% TBSA to each leg for each year of life after 1 year until 10 years. (Adult proportions are reached at 10 years)

Additionally small burns may be estimated by using the area of the palmar surface (fingers and palm) of the Patient’s hand, which approximates to 1% body surface area.

When calculating the TBSA ignore simple erythema.

Rule of Nines