

# SAMHS INFO BULLETIN

Compiled by Corporate Communication



## BURNS AWARENESS WEEK 06-12 MAY

Burns are skin damage and deeper tissue damage caused by contact with fire, heat, electricity, radiation, or caustic chemicals. Burns are classified according to the depth and extent of the skin damage, in the following way.

- **First-degree burns:** the skin is red, painful and very sensitive to touch. The damaged skin may be slightly moist from leakage of the fluid in the deeper layers of the skin.
- **Second-degree burns:** the damage is deeper and blisters usually appear on the skin. The skin is still painful and sensitive.
- **Third-degree burns:** the tissues in all layers of the skin are dead. Usually there are no blisters. The burned surface can appear normal, white, black (charred), or bright red from blood in the bottom of the wound. Damage to skin nerves can mean it is quite painless. The burned skin lacks sensation to touch.

### CAUSES OF BURNS

- Fire
- Hot liquid or steam
- Hot metal, glass or other objects

- Electrical currents
- Radiation from X-rays or radiation therapy to treat cancer
- Sunlight or ultraviolet light from a sunlamp or tanning bed
- Chemicals such as strong acids, lye, paint thinner or petrol

### **DO'S AND DONT'S WHILE TREATING A BURN**

- The first thing a person should do to treat a minor burn is to hold it under cold, running water for 10 to 15 minutes. If cold, running water is not available; immerse the burn in cold water or cover it with cold compresses.
- Be sure not to put ice directly against the burn; direct contact with ice cause frostbite and more tissue damage. Rather crush the ice and put it in a clean cloth.
- Once the burn has cooled via cold water or compress exposure, Apply paraffin gauze to the area. The paraffin gauze may soothe any discomfort that you feel, and will also prevent dryness and infection. Do not use any cream or lotion unless it has been cleared for treatment of burns, for example Burnshield.
- Once the burn is moisturized, cover it with a sterile gauze bandage. Just be sure to wrap the burn loosely to avoid putting too much pressure on the wound.
- Sometimes, in order to prevent infection, you body will produce fluid-filled blisters. Do not break these blisters- they will resolve and dry on their own.
- If needed , you can use an over –the-counter pain reliever like Panados or Aspirin until the pain is tolerable

***Approved by: D MED***