Chemical Burn Treatment

Call 102

1. Protect Yourself

- Put on gloves or apron, if possible.
- Avoid exposing yourself to chemicals.

2. Rinse and Clear Burn Area

- Flood area with cool water for at least 20 minutes or until help arrives.
- Make sure water doesn't flow onto another part of the person's body or onto you.
- Don't use a strong stream of water, if possible.
- As you flush the burn (not before), remove jewelry or articles of clothing with chemical on them, unless they're stuck to the person's body.
- After flushing the burn, follow instructions on the label of the chemical product, if available.
- Don't try to neutralize the burn with acid or alkali. This could cause a chemical reaction that worsens the burn.
- Don't put antibiotic ointment on the burn.

Among the few chemical toxins that should NOT be irrigated immediately with water are dry lime, phenols, and elemental metals (eg, sodium, potassium, calcium oxide, magnesium, phosphorous). Dry lime should be brushed off the skin prior to irrigation. It contains calcium oxide, which reacts with water to form calcium hydroxide, a strong alkali. Elemental metals and certain reactive metal compoundscombust or release hazardous byproducts when exposed to water. Examples include: sodium, potassium, magnesium, phosphorous, lithium, cesium, and titanium tetrachloride.

All fragments of such materials should be carefully removed with dry forceps and placed in a solution that is non water related (eg, mineral oil). Once this is done, the affected area should be covered with mineral oil (or a comparable solution) to prevent further exposure to air and moisture. Removal of phenol requires that it be wiped off the skin by sponges soaked in 50 percent polyethylene glycol (PEG).

3. Cover a Small Burn Area

- You can loosely wrap a small burn with dry, sterile gauze or clean cloth.