

# VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

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*Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery*

## **Wounds - Gasoline**

By now people are tired of hearing stories of my retirement. But I am telling you that more than imaginable monies could be had if I got a nickel for every time somebody hurt themselves with gasoline. This stuff is used because of its explosive properties for internal combustion engines as in your car. It was relatively inexpensive and so many used it as a solvent, to start the grill or for burning branches and leaves.

All of the following are ways that my patients injured themselves with gasoline, these uses are to be avoided: Burning trees, leaves and branches, stumps, wood piles, bee hives, ant hills, old paint and varnish, yourself. Do not use gasoline to thin paint, wash off old paint, or prime the carburetor of your car. Never use it as a solvent for your car parts, to clean your hands, or to free sticking parts or hinges. Throw away old paint brushes.

There are many non-flammable solvents now in the stores. Yes they cost more than gasoline (or they used to cost more). But how much is a skin graft to your burned hand going to set you back? Can you afford the lost time from work? I noticed that the flammable and non-flammable agents are on the same shelf at the store, right next to each other. Maybe they should be separated out and labeled more obviously. There is no reason to use something dangerous when a less toxic or less explosive agent is available.

Lighter fluid is a less explosive agent to get that grill started. It actually works better than gasoline because it burns slower and lasts longer to get those coals going. There are also electric starters that work well and fast. Check them out.

The burning of debris and yard waste is probably illegal but people do it anyway. The ones I see are those who do so on a dry windy day. Why do people burn things on windy days. Even our government is guilty of this. Remember Los Alamos? It is hard to get those fires started on windy days so out comes the gasoline. Your next stop - The Twilight Zone.

I use mineral spirits sometimes. Although it is less flammable than gasoline it is still a fire hazard. Do you have a fire extinguisher in your work area? Water cannot be used effectively on solvent fires. The oils float on the top of water and you may actually aid in spreading the fire. You need specific extinguishers for this application. Make sure you buy the right one. Call the fire department and ask them for advice.

Finally use other precautions. Wear safety glasses, gloves and full length jeans and long sleeve shirts. Think safety. Keep the kids out of the work area. If I had a nickel for every time a child was injured as a result of the parents negligence. This is the thing I really hate to see.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.  
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**Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company**

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