

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Wounds - Household hazards

I watched a TV program on fixing up your garage. They showed you how to increase the tension of your garage door springs. I cannot recommend this. I have treated many hand and face wounds related to people trying this "simple" maneuver. There are many do-it-yourself projects that can be done but only with the proper tools. Injuries occur often when people try to fix it without the appropriate tool. These days specialty tools are affordable and may be purchased in any hardware store. The sales people can help you with advise on the repair or may direct you to one of many books. Read up on it first.

Dishwasher doors keep me in business. People walk into them not knowing they are open or they fall open abruptly because the springs are worn. The ones that store flatware in the door can get heavy when overloaded. I have seen as many as two or three leg wounds in a week from the dishwasher door.

The other day I saw another heating pad burn. It was a bad third degree burn and surgery was required. Heating pads get less hot now than they did in the past. This is because people used them improperly. I do not believe that heat is actually good for anything medical to begin with. What people are doing now is putting the pad on their leg for example then wrap a blanket or towel over it. Then they fall asleep! Your sensation and your circulation are not what they used to be and a burn may result. Interestingly a bad third degree burn is not as painful as a lesser second degree burn. When the skin nerve endings are burned you cannot feel how deep the burn really went. There is a false sense that the burn is not too bad. For any burn, see your doctor. This is especially true for people with circulation problems and for diabetics.

I see patients with grease burns from the kitchen. The pan catches fire and while trying to move the pan into the sink or out doors results in spilled burning grease. Third degree burns of the hand may result. Skin grafting is needed. The kitchen should never be left unattended when frying. My wife and I have discussed what to do if fires result inside the house. For kitchen fires we have an approved extinguisher nearby. They are relatively inexpensive. Our plan is to move away from the burn and use the extinguisher on the fire. Periodically read the instructions so that you are prepared. Discuss this with the kids. Have a house evacuation plan. Practice the plan with your kids. This can be made into sort of a game and can be a fun learning experience for them.

Chemical burns from cleaning agents occur mostly on the hands. People use Chlorox®, ammonia, acids for the swimming pool and solvents as acetone or gasoline to clean with. When using these agents use gloves and eye goggles at all times. They are inexpensive compared to the cost of skin grafts and cornea transplants.

There are many household hazards. If we use common sense many problems may be avoided. One of my favorite sayings is the following: If you find yourself asking if maybe I could get hurt doing this then do not do it. If you say to yourself that maybe you should be wearing safety glasses, then go get some. When you are questioning yourself you are usually right to do so. Doing things right the first time is less work than doing it over or getting injured.

The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.

Venice Plastic Surgery, Venice Wound Center, Lakeside Medical Center

Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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