

Readers Digest

BURN ACCIDENTS IN THE KITCHEN

BY : DR. Sunil M. Keswani

Plastic, Cosmetic & Burns Surgeon (Mumbai)

A Burn Accident is a fairly common thing for any housewife who does cooking at home. Spillage or splashing of boiling hot oil quite often can lead to patchy scald burns.

- ❖ Master Yash Lokhandwala, a 3 years old child from Nashik was playing in the house, and suddenly ran into the kitchen and bumped into his mother who was just frying something in a pan, which was in her hand at that time. The whole pan got overturned on to the young child and he suffered 30% burns, involving his head, shoulders, anterior torso and both upper extremities. He had to be hospitalized in Nashik immediately, and after 24 hours was brought down to a prime Burns Unit in Mumbai for better care. He was lucky to survive the accident and went home after 6 weeks in the hospital, and had to undergo two skin grafting operations.
- ❖ Mrs. Kinkre from Jalgaon, a 32 years old mother of two was cooking in the kitchen. She bent forward over her burning gas to take out the spices which were kept in a cupboard right above the gas burner, not realising that the "pallu" of her saree caught fire as she did so, and before long she had sustained 70% deep burns. She was brought down to a Burns Unit in Mumbai, but died after battling for her life for about 4 weeks.
- ❖ Mrs. Pervin Byramji, a 65 years old Parsee lady from Byculla, Mumbai got up early morning at 5.30 a.m. to make her morning cup of tea. As she struck the match to light the gas, there was an explosion and she sustained 90% burns, and her 70 years old husband who was sleeping in the room adjoining the kitchen sustained 75% burns. Both of them succumbed to the burn injury in a Burns Unit in a nearby hospital. Thanks to the leakage of gas from a poorly fitting rubber tubing of the gas cylinder.

The best first-aid for any burns is to **POUR WATER ON BURNS TILL THE BURNING SENSATION SUBSIDES.** Subsequently, shift the patient to a Burns Unit.

A Burns Unit is a place where a patient can be isolated to prevent infection, and the staff is fully trained in the management of the burn patients.

The most dangerous complication of burns is infection, which can either kill the patient or may cause severe morbidity and the patient may develop thick scars or deformities known as contractures. The treatment of burns is painful & expensive.

Prevention of burns is far easier than the treatment of burns, and the vast majority of burns in the kitchen could be easily prevented with a few basic precautions mentioned below:

- ❖ Do not allow children to hover around the kitchen.
- ❖ Wear tight fitting cotton clothes without any loose ends like dupattas or palloos, which should be tucked into the waist.
- ❖ “Haste is Waste” – never try to hurry up while cooking. You become more accident-prone.
- ❖ Never store things just above the gas burners. Store them at the side.
- ❖ Always cook on a platform, never on the floor.
- ❖ Always get your gas pipe periodically checked up for fitting & leakage.
- ❖ Whenever the clothes catch fire, do not panic “**Stop, Drop & Roll**” to put off the fire and then pour water on the burns.

Burns in the kitchen can happen to ANYONE, so be vigilant, cautious and try to prevent burns.