

MEDI BRIEF

JULY 2018

Have you received your AMS tax certificate?

We sent your tax certificate at the beginning of June. If you have not received it yet, please update your contact details with the Call Centre or in the member log-in on www.angloms.co.za. To get your tax certificate, download it from the member log-in or call us on 0860 222 633.

Make your medical emergency information available when you can't speak

If you, your children, your parents or other loved ones have a medical condition, you should ensure that first responders or medical staff know of them, especially if the patient can't speak. This could be life-saving for patients with heart conditions, asthma, allergies, epilepsy, dementia, autism, bleeding disorders and other conditions.

How can you communicate when you can't speak?

Medical bracelets or necklaces are one way to inform paramedics, who are trained to look for them, about your condition. They can be personalised with your emergency contact and medical information. To make this information available might be life-saving for you. Find more information on the suppliers' websites, like www.iceid.co.za, www.medicalert.co.za, www.ertags.co.za, or search for other 'medical alert bracelets' online. First responders should also be able to find out that you are a member of Anglo Medical Scheme. Always carry your medical aid card with you and ensure the AMS sticker is on your car.

You can also make use of your smart phone's medical emergency functionality and apps. On the iPhone you can set up your Medical ID in Apple Health, recording your conditions, medications and emergency contacts. Android phones offer ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact groups that you can set up. You could also set an ICE message on your default lock screen text or use an image with your ICE message as your lock screen wallpaper. Search for other available ICE apps and don't forget the MySOS app, supported by AMS's emergency evacuation partner Netcare 911, which allows you to call for help, search for nearby healthcare providers, etc, by just opening the app. More information is on www.mysos.co.za.

Do you know of any other ways, apps or devices to use in case of an emergency? Let us know!

Burn injury prevention: stop, drop and roll



For healthcare professionals, the winter months are commonly known as 'burns season'. It is the time of year when the number of burn-related injuries could spike as people increasingly use open fires, paraffin, gas and electric heaters to stay warm.

Annually over a million people in Africa are affected by a burn-related injury. "Children are naturally inquisitive and as soon as they become mobile or start walking, they begin exploring their environment. This could result in them pulling down pots or kettles filled with boiling hot water, touching hot objects such as stovetops or playing with fire, matches or candles," says David Stanton, head of clinical leadership at Netcare 911. "House fires are often caused by candles or paraffin lamps left unattended and Primus stove explosions. Electrical burns are also seen fairly often."

Continues >>>

Tips to ensure the correct first aid treatment after a burn injury

Stanton says the first, most important rule is to move away from the heat source as soon as possible when a burn happens. "If your clothes have caught fire, follow the golden rule: stop, drop to the ground and roll to try to smother the flames. This rule also applies when you're helping someone else who is in trouble.

"If the fire is small enough, put out any flames to prevent further contact with the burning material. Before assisting someone else, make sure that it is safe and that you will not be putting your own life in danger," he notes.

Stanton also suggests caution before using a blanket or rug to extinguish a fire. "Some fabrics and materials, especially the more synthetic ones, may actually make matters worse. Using water in general or a fire extinguisher, particularly in the kitchen, is always first prize.

"Remove any clothing that might be covering the burn," he says. "Clothes can retain heat and should be gently removed as soon as possible. However, do not pull off clothing that has stuck to the skin. This may cause skin damage. If you are trying to remove foreign materials from the burn site and find that they are firmly stuck, rather let emergency medical services and medical professionals take care of the situation," he suggests.

The burning process in the affected area will continue even after the person has been removed from the source of the burn. To stop this, treat the burn immediately with cool, but not ice-cold, water. Depending on the location, size and severity of the injury, hold the affected area under cool running water until it becomes less painful. If larger areas of skin are affected, standing under a cool shower may be useful. "The goal is to reduce the heat as quickly as possible," he explains.

It can cause damage to the skin if the affected area is immersed in very cold water, ice or if frozen items are placed on it. If an affected area is particularly large, it can also potentially lead to hypothermia and affect blood pressure and circulation.

Do not rely on unfounded advice to apply butter, egg white, toothpaste or any types of lotions to the affected areas. "These substances can be difficult to clean out later and can cause infection.

"Ensure that a sterile dressing is applied, as it will help to relieve the pain, reduce damage to the skin and prevent infection. In order to keep the sterile dressing on the wound, cover it with a bandage," he recommends. However, when applying a dressing, take care not to break the skin and do not attempt to peel any blisters."

Source: Article by Martina Nicholson Associates (MNA) on behalf of Netcare 911

When to seek medical assistance

"If the burn injury is severe, causes significant pain and/or is larger than the palm of your hand, visit an emergency department or call an emergency medical services provider such as Netcare 911 on 082 911, for assistance. If the burn becomes infected, you have not had a recent tetanus vaccination, or blisters occur, you should seek medical advice from your doctor or emergency medical service provider," Stanton concludes.

Degrees of burns

According to the South African Burns Society, there are three different types of burns:

- **First degree:** Red skin, no blisters. Usually heals with little or no scarring.
- **Second degree:** Blisters and thickened skin. This can be a burn of either partial or full thickness of the skin, and full thickness burns may require skin grafting for the best healing.
- **Third degree:** Overall thickening of the affected skin, with a white colour. This burn is all the way through the skin layers.

Prevention tips for in and around the home

Burns can often be prevented. Stanton shares the following tips to ensure that safety and prevention are top of mind in the home environment:

1. Be careful and keep a close eye on babies and children around candles, paraffin lamps, electrical heaters with exposed elements, and open fires.
2. Use fireplaces, heaters and electric blankets safely.
3. Be alert to prevent injury from spills when carrying hot drinks and food.
4. Run cold water first into a bath and add hot water only afterwards.
5. Keep a close eye on children in the kitchen, especially near stoves, kettles, ovens and irons.
6. Check all electrical outlets to ensure that they are child safe.
7. Invest in a fire extinguisher for your home and learn how to use it correctly.
8. Make sure that you store matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
9. Ensure that young children fully understand the dangers of fire and electricity.
10. Babies, children and the elderly are especially at risk of burns. Take precautions to help protect them.

Visit www.angloms.co.za to learn more about your Scheme and benefits.

Find all previous MediBrief editions in the Info Centre > MediBrief Archive.

Member Queries:

Value Care Plan: 0861 665 665, anglo@primecure.co.za

Standard and Managed Care Plan: 0860 222 633, member@angloms.co.za

Claims: claims@angloms.co.za