Electric Shock Injury

Electrical injuries can cause a simple, minor contact burn. They can also cause much more serious injuries to the skin, deep tissues, nerves, and the heart. The type of injury depends on the amount, and the path the electric current takes through the body. **Electric shock causes the tissues to heat up and the muscles to spasm. Household outlet (110 volt) shocks usually do not cause any serious injury.** Even 220 volt shocks rarely cause major deep organ damage.

If you have a serious electrical burn or if you were shocked unconscious, you require close observation and will probably need to be hospitalized. Most minor burns can be cleaned and dressed with a burn ointment. Burns in children around the mouth will usually heal, but may require specialized care. Bleeding from a burn near the mouth can be controlled by direct pressure. Minor electric burns should be rested, elevated, and the burn wound dressing changed 1-2 times daily.

Most low-voltage injuries do not require hospital care. Be sure to protect children from electrical shock by using plastic outlet caps, two-step outlets, and eliminating extension cords. Be sure to follow-up with your caregiver to have your injuries rechecked as recommended within the next several days.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU DEVELOP:

- Signs of a wound infection (fever, increased redness, pain, swelling).
- Chest pain, palpitations, fainting, shortness of breath, headache.
- Extreme weakness, repeated vomiting, dehydration, dark urine.

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