

## **Push, Flush & Cool**

Most disaster planning guides advise you to keep a first-aid kit with your emergency supplies. This is a basic component of emergency preparedness. This article will discuss some basic first-aid skills. These skills could apply in a disaster situation, such as an earthquake, or in more common day-to-day challenges such as just being a parent.

### **PUSH ON THE CUT:**

Cuts and scrapes are some of the most common household or disaster emergencies. The rule here is simple. With bleeding emergencies, apply direct pressure on the wound. It is ideal to have a thick, sterile gauze pad but absent sterile gauze, find the cleanest cloth you can and place it over the wound. Use the palm of your hand to provide direct pressure by pushing on the gauze covering the wound. Keep applying pressure until the bleeding stops or medical personnel take over. Any bleeding that cannot be immediately controlled requires medical attention. If blood is squirting from a wound, this is a true 911 emergency! With squirting blood, apply direct pressure and call for help immediately! Another easy rule to remember, if you cannot immediately control the bleeding with household band-aids, call for help.

### **FLUSH THE EYES:**

Foreign material in the eye can cause serious injury. Whether the material is a liquid such as soaps, cleansers or gasoline, or particles such as saw dust or dirt, the rule with eyes is the same: Flush both eyes continuously with water! This is not the time to worry about whether the material will react with water, flushing is your only effective means of first-aid treatment and can save the eyes. Ordinary tap water is sufficient. Flush for a minimum of 30 minutes or until medical help arrives. Do not take chances!! Anytime a foreign material gets in the eyes you should seek immediate medical attention even if the flushing appears to relieve all irritation.

### **COOL THE BURN:**

Whether small or large, causing a simple blister or actual burning of the skin, again the rule here is simple: Cool the burn! Cooling a burn requires nothing more than flushing the burn area with a continuous stream of cool water. Burns can be caused by contact with a hot object or from a chemical. Again, no need to seek exotic remedies, just hold the burn area (hand, foot, leg, etc.) under the kitchen or bathroom faucet and run cold water over the injury for 30 minutes or until medical help arrives. In the case of a chemical burn, such as from an acid, carefully remove the contaminated clothing from the victim without coming into contact with the chemical. It is critical to cool a burn as transmitted heat can worsen the injury

**even though the victim is no longer in contact with a hot object. Anything beyond the most minor burn should receive medical attention.**

**With any medical emergency, large or small, call 911 for assistance. In the few minutes it can take for help to arrive, you can be very effective by remembering to push the cut, flush the eyes and cool the burn.**

**This article provides information on some basic first-aid techniques. It is no substitute for formal training. Your Milpitas Fire Department recommends all citizens enroll in a basic first-aid course. The Santa Clara County Chapter of the American Red Cross offers first-aid courses to the public. Call (408) 577-2178 to sign-up.**