

Inhalation Injuries

Inhalation injuries are among the most devastating types of trauma resulting from exposure to fire and smoke. PREVENT you and your loved ones!

SAFETY TIPS:

- Notify advanced medical personnel immediately
- Assess the patient's airway for patency
- Listen to his/her breathing and observe chest wall expansion
- Administer oxygen as indicated
- Elevate the head of the bed to a 45 degree angle
- Transport to an emergency car facility as soon as possible

FACTS AND FIGURES:

- Approximately 6,000 people die annually in the United States from fire injuries.
- Over half of these deaths result from inhalation injuries.
- Inhalation injuries increase mortality 30% to 40% when patients with cutaneous burns and inhalation injury are compared with patients with a similar amount of burn area.
- Of all types of inhalation injury associated with burn injury, carbon monoxide gas is a by-product of combustion. During fire and explosions, it is given off into the air in large amounts. This may cause the percentage of oxygen in a fire atmosphere to decrease from 21% to less than 10%.
- Other products, which may give off carbon monoxide poisoning, may include faulty furnaces, charcoal burners, use of gas, kerosene and propane engines in an enclosed space, and automobile exhaust.

Signs of inhalation injury:

- Singed nasal hairs
- Facial burns
- Burns around the mouth
- Mineral spirits - 104° F - paint thinner, brush cleaner.
- Redness, swelling or blisters in the mouth
- Changes in respiratory pattern, or hoarseness
- Cyanosis of the skin
- Impaired sensorium or mental status