

Banner - University Medicine shares prevention tips to highlight National Burn Awareness Week

National Burn Awareness Week is Feb. 2-8.

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TUCSON, Ariz. (Feb. 4, 2020) — Diane was on life support for five days before she realized where she was. Admitted to Banner - University Medical Center Tucson, she gained awareness waking from a coma to find herself in excruciating pain. The pain was stemming from third and fourth-degree burns to her back legs and buttocks.

“ I was stunned to read my medical record and learn what the doctors and nurses had to do to keep me alive. ”

Diane was treated at Banner - University Medical Center Tucson's Level 1 Trauma Center, the only American College of Surgeons Certified Level 1 Trauma Center in Tucson. The Level 1 Trauma Center features the [Banner - University Medical Center Tucson's Burn and Complex Wound Care Program](#) and is directed by [Lourdes Castañón, MD](#). Banner University Medical Center has 12 burn rooms.

The experienced team of specialists at the Burn Program provides treatment and follow-up care for children and adults with minor to severe burns, including patient injuries ranging from thermal, chemical and electrical burns.

National Burn Awareness Week is Feb. 2-8 and Banner Burn Program specialists are promoting the week to increase awareness of the frequency and causes of burn injuries in the United States and to share the advances in and resources available for burn care.

This year's Burn Awareness theme is: Contact Burns - Hot Surfaces Damage Skin. Contact burns result from contact with heated objects such as asphalt, sand, fireplace doors, space heater, or electrical appliances such as flat irons and clothing irons.

Diane regularly wears a fentanyl patch to treat lower back pain. On the day she was admitted to the hospital in August 2019, Diane last remembers laying down in her patio on her stomach to get some sun, laying in a mixed sun/shady space in her bikini.

Her husband assumed she had fallen asleep but was concerned when he stepped closer to check on her and noticed her breathing was off. He called 911 and Diane was given naloxone and treated for severe opioid toxicity. The sun had altered the fentanyl patch's function and that led to an opioid-induced coma. While Diane was out of consciousness, she was exposed to the sun and incurred the deep sunburns.

Diane was treated at Banner - University Medical Center for three weeks and required weekly follow-up care for several months after the incident.

"I was stunned to read my medical record and learn what the doctors and nurses had to do to keep me alive," Diane said. "I love Dr. Castañón and think the world of her and her staff. They were amazed at my recovery, but I know that family and a positive attitude, combined with doing what your doctor and nurses tell you to do works."

Prevention is best and you can avoid many burn injuries by implementing the following recommended safety tips:

Practice General Fire Safety at Home

Home fires often do happen unexpectedly, but you can take precautions to prevent them. The [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) (AAFP) recommends the following:

- Put smoke alarms in your home and check them monthly.
- Create a family escape plan and have regular fire drills at home.
- Designate a meeting place outside your home in case of a fire.
- Have your chimney and fireplace inspected by a professional once a year.
- Keep at least one fire extinguisher in your home and know how to use it.

Be Proactive in The Kitchen

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP), most kids who end up in burn units were not burned in fires; they were burned by food or something involving the preparation and consumption of food.

- You should never leave food cooking on the stove unattended — especially if children are in the house. The [Electrical Safety Foundation International](#) recommends using back burners whenever possible and turning pot handles away from reaching hands.
- Don't hold a child while cooking or removing hot food from the microwave, oven or stove. Teach kids at a young age which appliances are hot and should not be touched without parental supervision.
- Be mindful of the microwave, too. The [AAP](#) recommends only placing microwaves where young children are unable to reach them. Make sure to stir food well or let it stand for two minutes before tasting it so the heat can distribute evenly.

Protect Your Family (And Yourself) From Tap Water Scalds

- [AAP](#) recommends adjusting your water heater so the hottest temperature at the faucet is no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- When running a bath, test the water with your wrist or elbow before submerging your whole body.
- Once children are old enough to turn faucets on by themselves, show them how they can start the cold water before turning it too hot.

Keep Matches and Lighters Away from Children

- Matches and lighters should be locked and out of reach from kids. Adults should be mindful of using them, too. Make sure matches are fully extinguished before discarding them, and securely store matches and lighters where kids and teens cannot gain access to them. On a related note, you should never leave lit candles unattended.

Cover Electrical Outlets

- To prevent electrical burns, the [AAFP](#) recommends putting safety covers on any electrical outlets that are within a child's reach. Throw out electrical cords that are frayed or damaged.
- To prevent electrical fires, experts recommend having a licensed electrician check the wiring in your home at least once every 10 years.

Be Mindful of Unexpected Causes Of Burns During Summer Months

The sun can be damaging to your skin any time of year, but many people spend more time exposed during the summer months. It's important to wear sunscreen and protect your skin and to follow these [summer safety concerns](#) as well:

- Asphalt — Asphalt can reach extremely hot temperatures even when the temperature outside is fairly mild. According to Dr. Castañón, asphalt is a major burn hazard on Arizona summer days.
- Objects in the sun — Car door handles, seatbelt buckles and other metal car parts conduct heat quickly can turn into burn hazards after sitting in the sun for only minutes. In hot weather, Dr. Castañón [recommends](#) parking in shady areas, using a sun shade and opening car doors with a towel or over mitt. Warn children not to touch hot cars.
- Barbecues — Improperly handling or disposing of coals can result in serious burns or even fires. The charcoal company [Kingsford](#) recommends "suffocating" the fire. To do this, simply close the lid on your grill, and shut the vents until the ash has completely cooled, at least 48 hours. Once your used charcoal and ash is completely cold, you can throw it away.
- Fireworks — According to the [AAP](#), more than 12,000 fireworks injuries — many of them burns — were treated in emergency rooms in 2017. Experts recommend you avoid lighting fireworks entirely, even if they're marketed for consumer use.

Media: Diane is available for interviews but prefers to speak off camera. Please email media@bannerhealth.com to arrange an interview.

Banner – University Medical Center Tucson and Banner – University Medical Center South are part of Banner – University Medicine, a premier academic medical network. These institutions are academic medical centers for

the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson. Included on the two campuses are Diamond Children's Medical Center and many specialty clinics. The two academic medical centers are part of Arizona-based Banner Health, one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country. Banner Health is in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit www.BannerHealth.com/UniversityTucson or www.bannerhealth.com/UniversitySouth.

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