

The BurnNet

March 2015, Volume 34, No. 3



OUR GROUP MEETING

Thursday, **March 5**, 7:30-9:00pm

Directors Conference Room

First Floor, Main Hospital

All survivors of burns or necrotizing fasciitis and their family and friends are welcome. For more information call (916) 734-3636.

IT'S TAX TIME – SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS

Getting burned is not only a physical and emotional trauma; it can be financially traumatic as well. Did you know that many medical expenses might be deductible on your personal income tax return? What you may not know is which expenses qualify when filling out your itemized deduction tax form 1040 Schedule A.

Although we cannot provide all possibilities, below is a list of some of the more common deductible expenses a burn patient and his/her family may want to save receipts for:



- Premiums for medical, dental, long-term care, vision, Medicare Part B, and Medicare Part D insurance that you are not reimbursed for and that are not paid using pretax dollars
- Co-pays for medical, dental, or vision care, medical exams or tests
- The cost of eyeglasses, prescription medicine, crutches, wheelchairs, and other medical aids
- Adding handrails or grab bars anywhere (whether or not in bathrooms).
- Sessions with a psychiatrist or psychologist, and occupational and physical therapy
- Nursing care, hospital stays, or other conditions diagnosed by the doctor
- The cost of parking fees, tolls, transportation, and mileage for the trip to and from appointments with any of these medical professionals, transportation via ambulance to a medical facility, and the cost of overnight hotel stays for treatment that is received out of town

By no means is this list meant to be inclusive. Please check with your personal tax consultant and this website: www.irs.gov/publications/p502/ar02.html



QUOTE

But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer.
— Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

ARE YOU RECEIVING THE BURNNET VIA E-MAIL?

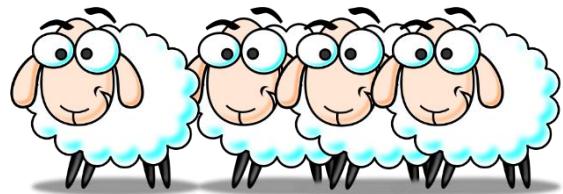
Would you like to be on the mailing list to receive The BurnNet every month?
Email Deb Jones RN at: debra.jones@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu



NATIONAL SLEEP AWARENESS WEEK

Reached 100 and still counting sheep?

National Sleep Awareness Week is March 1-7. It's all about raising the issues concerned with sleep and asking you to make sure you're getting enough of it!



Do you know how much sleep you should be getting? Nine hours is usually enough for adults but depending on the age and person, more or less time might be needed. The older you get, the less sleep you tend to need and vice versa. Unfortunately, things like snoring problems, nightmares, insomnia, and other issues can disrupt your sleep. A disrupted sleep often leads to feeling drowsy the next day, and stops you from carrying out your important daily tasks.

So what can you do during National Sleep Awareness Week?

- Avoid emotional upset or stressful situations before bedtime.
- Avoid using alcohol in the evening. Avoid caffeine for at least 6 hours before bedtime. Give up smoking, because nicotine is a stimulant.
- Eat a light snack before bedtime. Foods such as warm milk or turkey contain a natural sleep inducer called L-tryptophan.
- Establish a regular bedtime, but don't go to bed if you feel wide awake.
- Exercise regularly, but not in the last 2 hours before going to bed. Exercise, especially aerobic exercise, has been shown to make people fall asleep faster and get deeper and more restful sleep. Sex can be a natural sleep inducer for some people.
- Relax by reading, taking a bath, or listening to soothing music before going to bed.
- Take your TV, laptop or tablet out of your bedroom. Their noise and light stimulate your brain to think it's daytime, stopping production of melatonin and altering your circadian rhythm- making it harder for you to fall asleep.
- Use the bedroom for bedroom activities only. Once in bed, use creative imagery and relaxation techniques to keep your mind off unrestful thoughts. Avoid staying in bed for long periods of time while awake, or going to bed because of boredom.

Call your doctor if:

- Your sleeping problem becomes persistent and unbearable, despite home treatment
- Your sleeping problem occurs more than 3 nights per week for more than 1 month
- You have other worrisome symptoms, such as chest pain or shortness of breath or leg cramps

It might be a good idea to keep a sleep diary before an appointment with the doctor. The doctor can give you some tips that will sort things out or perhaps refer you on to a sleep specialist if needs be.

PRESSURE GARMENT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Patients who have problems with the fit or delivery of their garments can get help by calling the representative who fitted you first. In most cases, as a patient treated at UC Davis Regional Burn Center, that would be Heather Weidle of Enhance by Linda Reib. Her office phone number is 916-638-2508. Burn survivors should always act quickly anytime pressure garment problems are perceived. Don't be shy about this. Your recovery is dependent on being your own patient advocate.



UPCOMING EVENTS



March 7 Firefighters Burn Institute Crab Feed 2015

St. John Vianney Parish, 10497 Coloma Road, Rancho Cordova CA 96670

6 p.m. No Host Cocktails, 6:30 p.m. – 11 p.m. Dinner

Tickets are ONLY \$50/each and includes:

All-you-can-eat bread, salad, Cajun boil (includes: sausage, potatoes, corn, etc., seasoned with Cajun spices) And, of course... fresh, cracked crab! No Host Bar, Silent Auction, Music & Dancing. Mardi Gras Costume Contest!

For tickets, contact [Mimi Winters](#) at (916) 739-8525



HOME FIRE SAFETY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Individuals with disabilities are at higher risk of dying in a residential fire—as high as 6 times as likely--according to some studies.

Someone with an intellectual disability or cognitive deficits may have decreased awareness and ability to assess the risk of a fire, as well as a reduced understanding of an escape plan. A person with a physical disability may have difficulty executing the escape plan. Other behavioral conditions, including anxiety, may make it difficult to execute an escape plan as well. Parents of children with special needs should consider these risks and how they can best prepare their family to react in the event of a fire.

Here are some fire safety precautions that every family with an individual with disabilities needs to know:

- Identify a potential rescuer in the event of a fire and regularly practice an escape plan. Traditional recommendations are to practice twice a year, but families of persons with special needs may need to practice more regularly until everyone is comfortable with the plan.
- Consider a smoke alarm that includes vibration (e.g., bed shaking) or flashing/strobe lights, particularly if there is a family member with a hearing or vision impairment.
- The sound of a traditional smoke alarm may be extremely distressing to those with sensory sensitivities; a “parent-voice” alarm may provoke less anxiety and be more effective at waking up a child or other sensory-sensitive family member.
- Use visual aids (e.g, picture story, picture signs) to help teach those with cognitive deficits or a child, what to do in the event of a fire and to clearly mark the exits.
- Visit a fire station in advance to familiarize the child or family member with intellectual disabilities to the appearance of a firefighter with full gear.
- Notify the local fire department that a family member with special needs lives in the house.

For more information (including videos) on fire safety for children with special needs, visit the Safe Kids website: www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_age/special-needs

DAVID'S STORY

Here's my story: Gasoline on a campfire. 20%. Chest, belly, face. Face didn't need skin grafts. I'll start by saying that people who meet me for the first time can't tell I'm a burn survivor. Most of the time I like it that way. Because the scars are covered by jeans and a shirt, I can choose who to tell my story to. But even my family seems to forget what I went through and question why I'm not "all better" yet. Apparently there is a set length of time people can feel sorry for you-- but once you look normal, you must be normal. Too bad my brain hasn't healed as fast as my skin. But hey, this is supposed to be upbeat! I got a job now, so I have health insurance. I'm seeing a counselor AND a psychiatrist. Talking and meds combined seem to work best for me. Working on body image as it's pretty gnarly. I'm not a "group" person, but thanks for the offer. Keep up the strong work on the BurnNet. ~David

OTHER SUPPORT OPTIONS

- Bothin Burn Center Burn Support Group, San Francisco
4th Thursday of each month, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
Call 800-755-2876 for details and directions

- Santa Clara Burn Support Group, San Jose
1st Tuesday of each month, 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Call 408-885-6670 for details and directions

- Phoenix Society – Live Online Support

TO ENTER THE INTERNET CHAT (Every Wednesday night 6:00 – 7:30PM PST)

1. To enter the Chat you need to create a profile on our website. This is where you will choose your Screen name and password.
2. Go to our website and click on Weekly Live Chat under the Get Support tab.
3. Click Login in the right-hand gray box.
4. Click Join Weekly Live Chat in the right-hand gray box.
5. Login with your email address and password that you created when you set up your profile.
(If you are a first-timer, you will be asked additional profile information to participate).
6. The 123 Flash Chat will come up and you will need to type in your username (the Screen name you created) and password again at the top of the screen and click on login.
7. Click on the Burn Survivor Peer Support Room (blue band at top of screen) to enter the Chat room.
8. You are now ready to chat!



“FILL THE BOOT FOR BURNS” IS A SUCCESS

Raising funds for burn survivors, hundreds of firefighters from across the area were out seeking to fill boots with donations at the intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Greenback Lane on Presidents' Day Weekend during the 21st annual “Fill the Boot for Burns” fundraiser.

Firefighters Burn Institute is a Sacramento-based nonprofit, started by firefighters back in 1973, which helps provide treatment and recovery programs for burn survivors, as well as host burn-related training and kids camps.

Weather was fabulous, allowing for the annual Safety Fair on Saturday, featuring a “Jaws of Life” car-cutting demonstration by Sacramento Metropolitan Fire, a live helicopter landing, fire truck and ambulance displays, clowns, face painting, and fire and burn prevention education booths.

When all was said and done the Firefighters Burn Institute raised over \$126,000! A heart-felt thank you to the firefighters that volunteered their time and to all the generous members of our community that made a point of driving by that weekend to “Fill the Boot for Burns”!!