

## Injuries for Thought

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As you may have read in the past Gazette issue, I am an admittedly quirky Emergency nurse. As such, I would like to tune you (the public) in about 'Predictable Predicaments', so you might possibly avoid a trip to the Emergency Room. Because - let's face it - going to the ER is no picnic (You can tell because the food is so awful... although there are a lot of weenies). And forget about meeting George Clooney. He doesn't work there. TRUST ME. For your education and entertainment, I have included a short list of **Warm Weather Boo Boo's** (the official medical designation of this particular genus of injuries) in no particular alphabetical, severity or minimum-brain-cells-required order.

### **The Dreaded Mower**

Every year, at least a handful of unfortunate folks discover that no matter how tough you are, you will never win a fight with a lawn mower! Missing, lacerated &/or mangled limbs are obviously the top mower trauma we see. Here's The Rule: **Never ever stick any body part in or near the moving parts of a lawn mower** (... or in your ear.) Did you know that when grass debris which has blocked the turning of mower blades is removed, the blades can suddenly start turning again even if the mower is off? Chances of this seem to improve if you have your hand wedged in the guts of the mower. Note: Backyard Barfing can ensue if anyone, including the victim or the person designated to drive you to hospital, sees the stump before it is bandaged.

#### **Suggestions:**

- If your mower is gummed up, turn it off, then use a stick to UN-gum it
- Nude mowing can expose more than finger and toe bits to the blades!
- Rocks and other debris can suddenly become bullets out the back of a mower!
- Leave a hot mower in the shade to cool before fiddling with it
- Be EXTRA careful when you're mowing up or down a slope. A good option is to mow horizontally. A better option is

to claim drunkenness, then insist you shouldn't operate the mower impaired thereby 'guilting' someone else into cutting your grass

- Never mow in the rain especially if you use an electric mower.
- Safety First! I'm pretty sure that your lawn will wait for better weather, until your wounds heal, or you sober up.

**Extreme Example:** Two labourers who, after imbibing in numerous lagers (to ensure proper kidney functioning no doubt) on a hot day brilliantly decided to trim the HEDGE with the LAWNMOWER. They presented - laughing - to Emergency, minus their fingers. The apparent hilarity of their situation evaporated along with their blood alcohol level.

### **Deck Injuries**

Many people fall over deck railings from sitting, standing, or drinking positions (most common). Or they lean so heavily against the railing that it breaks. Injuries, of course, depend on how far the fall is and what you hit when you get there. (For more information, refer to my last gazette article on Preventable Head Injuries.)

### **Mastication Injuries**

(For your information, 'mastication' refers to the business of CHEWING. What were you thinking?)

- Choking on large chunks of BBQ foods occurs often, usually when you're laughing at some fool falling over the deck railing.
- Slurping in a stinging insect with your next gulp of soda can be a creepy, disgusting experience which can be seriously worsened when the poor recipient of the sting happens to be ALLERGIC. In this case, the victim needs to be treated immediately by placing him or her in a quiet shady spot to await the medics. Oh, I'm talking about the person - I doubt much can be done for the bug at this point.

**Extreme Example:** Take the medical urban legend of the lone diner who, choking on his supper, scrambled out to his deck to self-administer the Heimlich Maneuver by impaling himself just below the ribs on the deck railing to force the offending food up and out of his windpipe. However, he neglected to foresee the immediate future; the energy needed to expel the esophageal clog was in fact force enough to launch him up and over the said deck railing. He landed on concrete several feet below, breaking both legs. Apparently the hunk of unchewed burger was not of a sufficient size or position to cushion his fall.

### **Strains and Sprains**

Many of these are preventable. Make sure that your yard is free of toys, snares, automatic weapons or (my favorite) a stray rake. Fill in badger holes and cover up old mine shafts! (Oops – forgot! This isn't Texas!) Don't leave pesticides near your margarita blender, either.

My best advice is to enjoy the weather by relaxing in your favorite deck chair reading yet another fascinating issue of the **Gazette!**

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