



An Inside View:

Q&A with Rabbi Shia Weinstock, EMT

EXPERT ON NATURAL BURN AND WOUND CARE

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO ENTER THE FIELD OF NATURAL BURN AND WOUND CARE?

I've been treating wounds for about ten years. At one point, I started to study Chinese herbs and to experiment with various oils. Time and again, I was amazed at the koach of the briaah. I couldn't believe how a few herbs can do wonders. This awareness was what eventually motivated me to come up with my own formula for hard-to-heal wounds. Maximizing on the healing anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial, and anti-inflammatory power of various herbs and vitamins, I've created an oil, a cream, and a powder that work wonders in healing even very deep burns and wounds.

WHAT KIND OF SUNBURNS NEED TREATMENT?

People must first understand the difference between burns. A first-degree sunburn is superficial, only affecting the skin's outermost layer, and is thus easiest to heal at home without serious intervention. It's perfectly normal for the burn area to swell up, because layers of fluid in the body are in turmoil as a result of the trauma. People have a misconception that if a burn doesn't hurt, it's not deep. On the contrary, sometimes the opposite is true. When a burn penetrates deeply, it kills the nerves. I see it as a good sign when a burn starts hurting. Sometimes, when the burn victim's pain is so intense that he can't walk, I would advise him to see a doctor, because even in cases of first-degree burns damage may occur to the nerves immediately under the skin.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A NORMAL HEALING PROCESS?

It takes a serious first-degree sunburn one week to ten days to heal completely. When the dead tissue sheds, people think the burn got worse. The scaling skin is actually a normal part of the healing process. At that last phase with all burns, just moisturize the skin until the new smooth layer underneath appears.

HOW WOULD YOU CLASSIFY SECOND-DEGREE SUNBURNS?

The epidermis is the outermost layer of skin that is visible to the eye. Next is the dermis, and then the subcutaneous layer. A second-degree burn is anything that breaks the

epidermis, such as blisters or cracked skin, exposing the dermis. It's obviously a lot more painful than a first-degree burn.

Much of the pain of a second-degree burn happens as a result of a buildup of fluid under the skin. As soon as the blister is popped but not removed, the pressure and pain are relieved. The conventional way is to peel off the skin, which is immensely painful. We let the body do the repairs when it's ready for it. Blisters sometimes appear only the next day, which is why I usually change the first dressing after 24 hours, and then leave the next one on for 48 hours. A second-degree burn takes between two to three weeks to heal.

DO YOU DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF THE BURN ON YOUR OWN?

I always recommend every patient I see to consult with a doctor as well. Although I have extensive experience in the field, I am not a licensed medical practitioner. One case comes to mind that highlights the importance of seeing a doctor in conjunction to my work. An elderly woman came to me with what looked like a second-degree sunburn. She told me that she uses hot stones for her back pain and she fell asleep while they were on her. I immediately discerned that her case required a doctor's intervention. After I applied one dressing and then a second dressing and nothing changed, I started to doubt whether or not she was suffering from a burn. In the end, because she was seeing a doctor, who was also flummoxed at her case, he sent her for further testing

that revealed her true condition. She was suffering from an interesting condition known as post-herpetic neuralgia, which occurs when the same virus that exhibits as shingles and chickenpox reawakens in the body and presents itself as a burn. Once we knew what it was, we saw she indeed had all the symptoms. She didn't need any of my dressings to heal! Since that incident, I am especially cautious to point out that every patient must go to a doctor.

HOW DOES YOUR TREATMENT DIFFER FROM THE CONVENTIONAL METHOD?

First of all, in conventional medical treatment, the doctors

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peel off the burnt skin. Of course, the wound doesn't heal nicely, so they subsequently recommend skin grafting. We do exactly the opposite. When we do the work, we keep the dead skin nice and clean. We let the body do its job. It has its own wondrous apparatus in order to regenerate everything that must be fixed. Just give it the nutrients it needs and it will take care of itself. That's our belief.

SO WHAT'S THE NATURAL FIRST AID ALTERNATIVE FOR TREATING SUNBURNS?

It's perfectly normal for a person to develop a fever after he gets burned. After all, the skin is the biggest organ in the body, and it is waging a war. Part of conventional protocol is to cover the victim with blankets to keep his body temperature intact.

First aid for burns is to wash a potato, peel it, wash it again, and then grate it. Cover the entire burnt area in order to relieve it. The potato has a natural power to draw out the heat of a burn in the same way it pulls out salt from food. The controversial part regarding this treatment is that the potato is placed on an open wound, but we believe that if it's washed well it's entirely sterile and extremely relieving.

Another old-fashioned but no-fail remedy is to crack a raw egg and slather it on the burnt area. This works especially well for the face, where it's not simple to apply grated potatoes. As soon as the egg dries up on the face, apply another one. The logic behind this treatment is that it provides the body something to cook on the surface so that the heat doesn't penetrate deeper.

One word of caution, though: Never use both at the same time! If you applied raw eggs, do not put grated potatoes on top of that. A patient once came to see me after applying one of top of the other and she ended up with a cooked potato kugel on her body, which was extremely painful to clean off. She applied both because she took advice from two different sources. One neighbor said eggs and another well-meaning friend said potatoes, so she ended up with a fresh kugel stuck to the open skin. That's a good reason to have a professional do the treatment properly. A responsible practitioner will follow up and change the dressings as needed.

Recently, a couple had to cut their vacation to Mexico short after they both got badly burned by the blazing sun there. They could barely walk when they came to me, saying that in Mexico they tried aloe vera. Especially in a case like this, when treatment isn't readily available, it's good to know that raw eggs help.

HOW DID YOU TREAT THEIR SUNBURN WOUNDS?

I applied the natural oil, cream, and powder that I use in my treatments. In contrast to the conventional treatment that aims to keep the burn dry, I then cover the burn with gauze and plastic because I always keep it moist. When a burn is dry and the bandage is then removed, more skin is unnecessarily peeled off.

CAN NATURAL CREAMS BE APPLIED AT HOME?

Even if a person can buy the cream and apply it himself, I urge all burn victims to go to a professional. I tell all my patients to come back until I see that the skin is completely sealed. I also send them to a doctor to ensure that everything is under control. Only once the skin is sealed do I tell the parents or patient to continue applying it until all signs of the burn are gone. Never treat a serious burn yourself. A professional knows how to clean it properly and to keep the area sterile. Sometimes, the dressing has to be tightened, because the skin doesn't always know when to stop growing and you want to heal without scars. Also, people who don't do this work every day are understandably afraid or repulsed to do it.

WHY DO MOST PRACTITIONERS STILL FOLLOW THE CONVENTIONAL METHODS OF TREATING BURNS?

Most doctors simply don't know any better than what they were medically trained to do. Slowly but surely, I'm gathering a following of doctors who are becoming aware of the efficacy of the natural products I've produced and are thus giving me a fighting chance. As I work to gradually spread awareness, I've gathered hundreds, if not thousands, of before and after pictures of all kinds of burns and wounds that healed beautifully with minimal or no scarring. My goal is to create an awareness regarding the natural healing power in herbs. All we need is the healing powers Hashem invested in nature to cure the deepest, most painful burns and wounds. When conventional doctors witness these healing powers, they are awed by Hashem's Creation. ♥

