

### Jaw Fractures

**Q** My son has suffered a fracture to his jaw playing football. How is this treated and will he have scars?

**A** Sports injuries are the third most common cause of jaw (or mandible) fractures after motor vehicle accidents and assaults. Mandible fractures are treated with either “closed” or “open” techniques. To treat the fracture “closed,” the upper and lower jaws will be wired together for four to eight weeks depending on your son’s age. This means your son will need to be on a liquid diet during this period. To treat the fracture “open,” incisions will be made in the overlying skin and the bones are held together with titanium screws and bone plates. These incisions can usually be placed inside the mouth, so any scar will be hidden. This will allow your son to open and close his mouth normally; however, the plates and screws are very small so your son still must not chew solid food. No activity is allowed that may result in a blow to the face, so that means no football for eight weeks regardless of the treatment method used. The best treatment option will be determined with your son’s oral surgeon.



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### Fall Allergies

**Q** Why do my family’s allergies seem to flare up in the fall? How can I keep them healthy this year?

**A** The most common fall allergen in this area is the ragweed pollen. Also known as ambrosia artemisiifolia, the common ragweed plants in the Chattanooga region each can produce up to 1 billion pollen granules each season. The typical ragweed season begins in early September and lasts till the first frost. This extended period of high pollen exposure leads thousands of patients to symptoms of runny nose, itchy eyes, sneezing and nasal congestion. A recent poll performed by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America found that Chattanooga ranked number nine in the nation as one of the worst places to live during fall allergy season. The other major allergens in the fall are mold spores. The combination of humidity, dampness and rain produces mold spores that can be both indoors such as in basements, crawlspaces and bathrooms, and outdoors in piles of



leaves. To protect your family this fall season from allergy suffering, begin early with daily over-the-counter antihistamines such as Claritin, Zyrtec and Allegra. You can also take prescription topical steroid and antihistamine nasal sprays. If you’re looking for an all-natural curative therapy, then allergy shots are for you. Allergy shots or Immunotherapy offers a long-term resolution to daily allergy meds and symptoms. Suffer no more!



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### Hot Flashes

**Q** When do hot flashes end? And how can I find relief without taking hormones?

**A** The occurrence of hot flashes varies from woman to woman. Some women are fortunate and don’t experience hot flashes;

instead, their periods just stop (12 months without a period is menopause). Other women may have severe hot flashes accompanied by other symptoms, including night sweats, insomnia, irritability, and vaginal dryness. Non-hormonal treatments include diet modification, exercise, antidepressants, and even some medications used to treat hypertension. In my opinion, the most effective is diet and exercise, followed by antidepressants. Some women may try herbal treatments such as black cohosh. If my patient is trying this and it’s working for them, I do not discourage them from using it. However, scientific studies indicate they are no more effective than placebo.



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### Burn Treatment

**Q** As the cold weather moves in, we have neighbors over for bonfires quite a bit. If someone were to get a burn, how should we treat it on our way to the doctor?

**A** This is a great question because it gives me a chance to help remove some possible misconceptions about burn care and give people some simple information to help in the event of a burn injury. I worked for three years at a tertiary burn center in Texas several years back and witnessed how patients were given numerous home remedies prior to seeing our staff. They ranged from Crisco, to butter or margarine, Vaseline, and lotions. While these remedies usually weren’t harmful, these rarely helped the burn and were painful to rub off. There are a few very simple general rules that will help you before you see a professional



about a burn injury. First, once you recognize an injury from a burn, get cool water on it immediately. This will both soothe burned skin and potentially reduce the depth of burn injury. Second, drink water! Burns not only

injure skin, but your body needs more fluid to counteract the effect on your whole body. So while you are arranging transportation, drink water. Finally, don’t wait to be seen. If you have burned or blistered skin, please seek immediate help—a burn that looks small may be worse than you think. Depending on its location, a burn can have very long lasting consequences if not treated quickly (think hands or face). One important message to tailgaters: alcohol and fires are a dangerous combination, so be smart. At Doctors Express, we have three locations and experienced providers to help you with urgent needs like burns and many others!



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