

# Prevention of Cement Burns

## Factsheet

- Cement powder is alkaline in nature (pH of 12 to 13) which makes it harmful or caustic to the skin
- When cement is dry it contains calcium oxide, which is not particularly dangerous. However, when water is added to cement, calcium hydroxide is formed, which is extremely alkaline.
- Cement absorbs water (hygroscopic). It will draw water from any material it contacts, including skin.
- Cement combines with sweat and continues to destroy the tissue as long as it is in contact with the skin.
- Cement powder can penetrate clothing. Pain and burning sensation do not occur immediately.



- ✓ Do wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- ✓ Do wear waterproof gloves when handling or placing concrete.
- ✓ Do wear long pants and long shirts.
- ✓ Do remove affected clothing and quickly rinse clothes in clean water.
- ✓ Do gently brush any dry chemicals off the skin.



- ✗ Do not get wet cement inside your gloves or boots.
- ✗ Do not allow protective clothing to become saturated with moisture.
- ✗ Do not ignore cement splashes to the clothes or skin.



### First Aid for Cement Burns

- Take gumboots/clothing off. Wash self-down with water, dry and change clothing.
- Run clean running water over the affected area immediately, for at least **60 minutes**

### First Aid for all Burns

If you, or someone you know is burnt, take the following actions:

1. Remove clothing and jewellery
2. Apply cool running water to the burn
3. Cover burn with clean cloth and keep the patient warm  
**Do NOT use ice, butter, creams, etc**
4. Seek medical attention for any burn bigger than 3cm, or with blisters, or if any other concerns are present