

Chemical Burns

First aid is the same for all chemical burns, except a few specific ones for which a chemical neutralizer has to be used. Alkaline such as drain cleaner causes more serious burns than acid such as battery acid because they penetrate deeper and remain active longer. Organic compounds such as petroleum products are also capable of burning.

Figure 6



Chemical burn from sulfuric acid

A chemical burn is the result of a caustic or corrosive substance touching the skin – **figure 6**. Because chemicals continue to “burn” as long as they are in contact with the skin, they should be removed from the victim as rapidly as possible.

DO NOT apply water under high pressure- it will drive the Chemical deeper into the tissue.

DO NOT try to neutralize a chemical even if you know which chemical is involved.

Figure 7



Flooding a chemical burn

1. **Immediately remove the chemical by flushing the area with water - figure 7.** If available, use a hose or a shower. Brush dried powder chemicals from the skin before flushing unless large amounts of water are immediately available. Water may activate a dry chemical and cause more damage to the skin. Take precautions to protect yourself from exposure to the chemical.
2. Remove the victim's contaminated clothing and jewelry while flushing with water. Clothing can hold chemicals, allowing them to continue to burn as long as they are in contact with the skin.
3. Flush for 20 minutes all chemical burns. Washing with large amounts of water dilutes the chemical concentration and washes it away.
4. Cover the burned area with a dry, sterile dressing or, for large areas, a clean pillowcase.
5. Seek medical attention immediately for all chemical burns.

Caution:

DO NOT apply water under high pressure as it will drive the chemical deeper into the tissue.

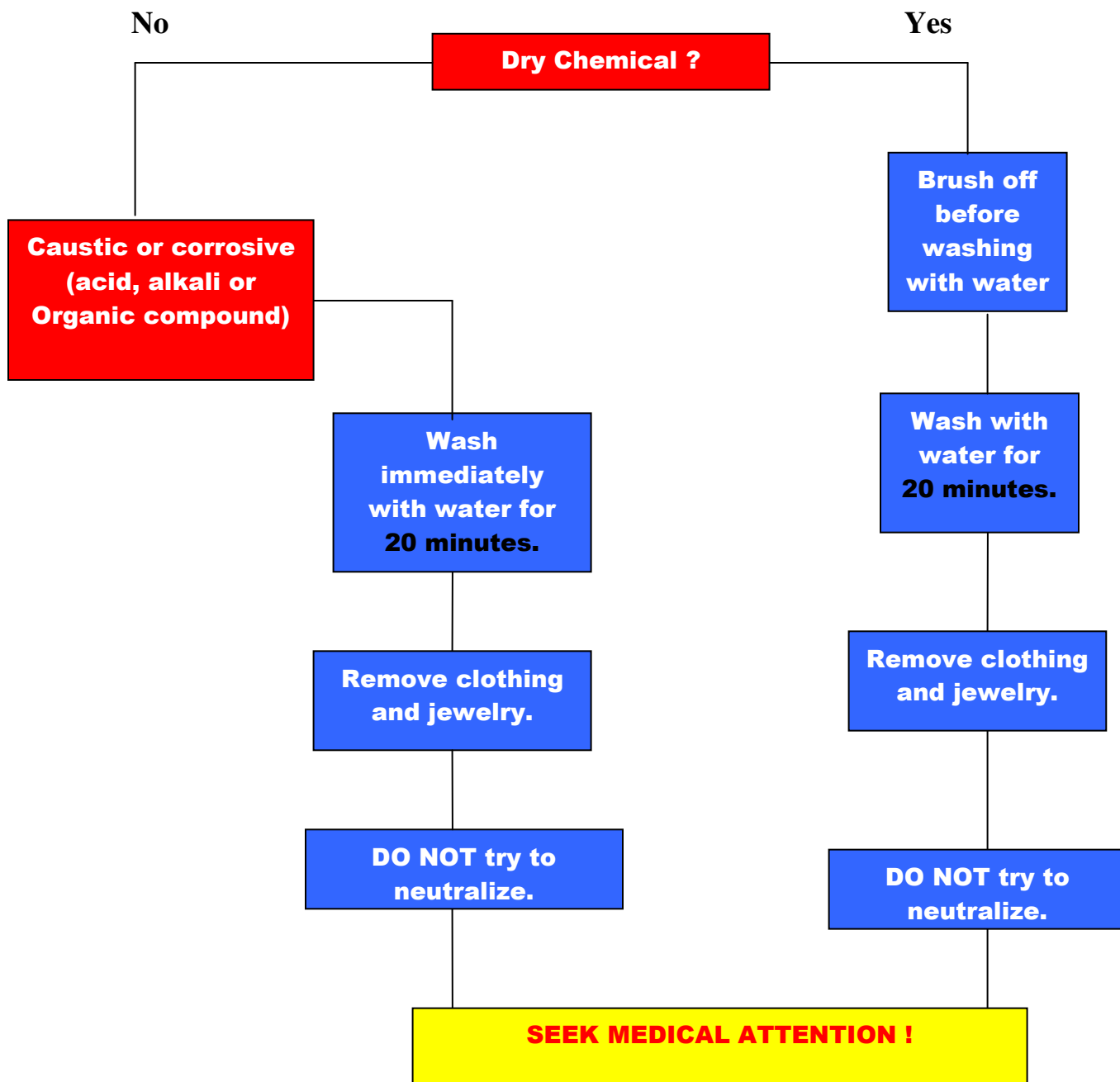
DO NOT try to neutralize a chemical even if you know which chemical is involved.

Heat may be produced, resulting in more damage.

Some product labels for neutralizing may be wrong.

Save the container or the label for the chemical's name.

CHEMICAL BURNS



Chemical Burns Test

- True False 1. When washing chemicals off the body flush with water for at least 5 min.
- True False 2. When washing chemicals off the body use high-pressure water.
- True False 3. Do not try to neutralize chemical because more damage may result.
- True False 4. Brush dry powder chemicals from the skin before flushing unless large amounts of Water is immediately available.

Scenario: Tim is a 28-year-old man using a caustic drain cleaner to a quality bathroom sink. Fifteen minutes after applying the chemical, he runs water into the sink drain remains clogged. He then ignores the instructions on the drain cleaner package and uses a plunger to clear the drain. The solution in the sink splashes on his arm. What should you do?

1. False - 20 min
2. False - **DO NOT** - high pressure water will drive the Chemical deeper into the tissue
3. True
4. True