

New specialised burns unit opens at Netcare Milpark Hospital

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Netcare Milpark Hospital is renowned throughout South Africa and beyond our borders as a leader in the handling of trauma cases. The hospital has the largest private trauma complex outside of the USA and has over 15 years experience in the handling of major burns. Now it will also host South Africa's only dedicated private Burns Centre.

The new Netcare Milpark Burns Centre, opened officially today, will have eight dedicated, isolated beds and a dedicated burns theatre, with a team of experienced specialists that will provide the best possible care any burns patient may require.

This past Wednesday was commemorated as National Burns Day and South Africa's statistics on burn deaths are quite alarming. Burns account for over a fifth of all deaths in children under the age of one year and it is the leading cause of death amongst children younger than five years. Yet most people will survive severe burns injuries. According to the American Burns Association burns victims admitted to specialised burns centres, such as the new one at Netcare Milpark Hospital, have a 94,4% chance of survival.

Cobus Venter, General Manager of Netcare Milpark Hospital, says the hospital's new Burns Centre will aim to provide its patients with not only the best chance of survival, but also complete rehabilitation.

"The eight bed Netcare Milpark Burns Centre has been designed to reduce the potential infection rate of burns patients by means of Intensive Care Isolation Cubicles and a dedicated Burns Theatre in the Centre," he says. "The most modern technical equipment was sourced to support the multidisciplinary group of medical professionals. In this team approach, Trauma & Critical Care Specialists work closely with Plastic Surgeons to ensure both quality and quantity of care."

Besides core medical staff, the multidisciplinary group also includes physicians, nephrologists, special teams in the operating room, a trauma counseling team, special wound and dressing nursing staff, renal dialysis services, physiotherapists, the hyperbaric medicine centre, a dietician, pharmacists and the Netcare Rehabilitation Centre.

According to Prof Ken Boffard, Head of Netcare Milpark Hospital's Trauma Unit, the severity of burn injuries is very often dependent on the type of burn and how fast it has been treated correctly. "Burn injuries are classified according to the extent or size of the area affected, the depth of the burn and whether internal organs such as lungs are involved."

Netcare Milpark Hospital currently sees patients with many different types of burns injuries, from chemical, explosion, petrol, veldt fires, buildings or shack fires, aircraft, water and electrical fires. Says Prof Boffard: "Incidentally, around a quarter of burn injuries admitted to the Netcare Milpark Trauma Centre include other trauma injuries such as broken limbs or head injuries."

Before now Netcare Milpark Hospital often admitted burns patients that were referred from across the country since they had isolation beds in their Trauma Intensive Care Unit for this purpose. These patients suffered from percentages or degrees of burns that most other facilities would not admit, as burns injuries are highly susceptible to infection. A high occupancy rate has prompted the hospital to not only expand on the number of beds and facilities available for the treatment of these patients, but also to make it a dedicated treatment centre for burns patients.

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