

Castle Rock teen suffers serious burns after vaporizer battery explodes in pocket

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CASTLE ROCK, Colo. -- A father and his teenage son are issuing a strong warning to others after 17-year old Marcus Forzani suffered second- and third-degree burns when a vaporizer batter exploded in his pocket.

"You don't want to be in these shoes of where my son is. It's a painful and long process. Do not flirt with it," the teen's father, Michael Forzani, said. Lying in a hospital bed, Marcus is doing his best to remain positive.

"Seeing your whole leg pussed out and all black, it doesn't make you feel too good about yourself," he said.

Covered in bandages, Marcus is recovering from second- and third-degree burns to his left leg and hand.

"The whole left side of my thigh to about halfway down my calf," he said.

On Thursday, Marcus' leg was charred black and blistering over after he said a vaporizer battery exploded in his pocket while at school. "Bell rang, stood up to get my jacket, which was on the other side of the classroom, five steps within that sparks started flying out of my pocket," Marcus said of the accident. "It literally looked like someone was welding in my pocket."

Taken to the Burn and Reconstruction Center of Colorado at Swedish Medical Center to recover, Marcus is not alone in his injuries, plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr. Tanya Oswald said.

"These injuries can be devastating. He sustained full thickness burn injuries. ... In the past six months, we've seen an increase in the number of burn patients as well as dramatic injury patients in relation to electronic cigarettes and battery-operated vapor devices," Oswald said. This is information Forzani said people, and specifically teenagers, need to know.

"You see these kids and you're going, there's a ticking time bomb. Is that one going to blow up? Is that one going to catch this kid on fire? You don't know," he said.

Now the high school senior is hoping his message will be heard by his peers and prevent others from having to lie in the same bed he is now in.

"I just feel, people, if they know how tragic it is, they might actually make a movement and get rid of it or something," Marcus said.

Marcus has undergone one surgery and will need at least two more as well as physical and scar management therapy.

Marcus said he has thrown away the vapor pen and hopes others will do the same.