



For immediate release

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**WITH GARDENING AND LAWN CARE SEASON APPROACHING, USE
COMMON SENSE WHEN OPERATING TOOLS AND MACHINERY**

*Most injuries caused by improper use of power tools and lawn movers
combined with “the rush to get it done” factor*

Baltimore, MD (March 22, 2011) – With the effects of Baltimore’s long, cold winter winding down, many area residents are noticing the daily greening of their lawns, as well as the tips of tulips and daffodils poking through hardened ground. Anxious to shake off prolonged cases of cabin fever, many local people are starting to plan their planting and lawn care strategy with the goal of working outside at the first hint of warmer temperatures. According to advice from the physicians of Greater Chesapeake Hand Specialists, make sure finger, hand and arm safety plays a major part of this planning.

“Our office, as well as area hospital emergency rooms become flooded with an assortment of injuries that coincide with the arrival of spring time,” stated Dr. Peter C. Innis of Greater Chesapeake Hand Specialists. “Many people, anxious to complete tasks around their home, do not take the proper precautions when using power tools and other machinery. We also treat problems associated with the repetitive use of tools such as shovels and rakes including joint sprains, tendonitis and blisters. A common sense approach to these activities could eliminate most situations,” he added.

To avoid early-season injuries, Dr. Innis makes the following recommendations to the spring time gardener.

- read the operator’s manual prior to using the machine to insure proper use
- prior to using a gardening machine, such as a lawn mover or electric hedger at the start of the spring season, take the tool to a local shop for maintenance. Make sure it is in proper operating condition
- start slow with any outdoor activity. Work no more than one hour at a time and then take a break to give your body a chance to recover

- purchase new gloves on an annual basis. Gloves used year-in and year-out lose their integrity and protection characteristics. Over time, regularly-used gloves tend to shrink or expand and do not fit the hand in a snug fashion
 - never put your hand or fingers near the moving parts of lawn mowers or other machinery. Completely turn off all equipment before examining or working on it.
 - prior to mowing, survey the lawn for any loose objects such as rocks, sticks and other objects that could become projectiles and cause injury
 - use a tool - not the hand or fingers – to remove any objects
 - make sure children and pets are not in the mowing area.
 - do not operate machinery if you are impaired by a substance

Should an accident or injury occur, make an immediate assessment of its severity. Most cuts to the finger or hand can be stopped by applying pressure to the wound area. If the bleeding does not subside within fifteen minutes of the injury or if numbness or a tingling sensation is present, visit an emergency room or hand specialist immediately.

“Life-changing injuries can occur in a split-second interval, so we encourage everyone to respect the danger present with garden power tools and lawn mowers. People should also be attuned to the prevention of common sprains and overuse injuries by not overdoing gardening and lawn care activities, especially early in the spring season,” Dr. Innis added.

Founded in 1987 and based in Lutherville, MD, Greater Chesapeake Hand Specialists, P.A. focuses on providing successful outcomes for the entire spectrum of problems associated with the hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder. The practice group, which consists of nine full-time physicians, maintains seven satellite locations throughout Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Howard and Talbot counties, as well as Baltimore City. For more information visit www.chesapeakehand.com or call 410-296-6232.