

Burns and Scalds



When we think about burn-related injuries, we often think about house fires. But did you know that many burns, especially those to children, do not involve fire at all? Burns can also be caused by contact with hot liquids or steam (these are called scalds), or by contact with hot objects, electricity or chemicals. On average, 120,000 children younger than 21 are treated in hospital emergency departments for burn-related injuries each year.

Burn and Scald Injury Facts

- Burns are among the most painful and devastating injuries a person can live through. The recovery period is often very long and difficult.
- Young children have thinner skin than older children and adults. As a result, their skin burns more deeply and at lower temperatures.
- Hot bath water causes more than half of all scalds in children.
- Thermal burns, or burns from hot objects, are the most common type of burns.

Who is at Risk?

- Children younger than 6 years and children with disabilities are at greatest risk of burn-related injury.
- Boys are more likely than girls to suffer a burn-related injury.
- Scald burns are more common among young children.
- Older children are more likely to be injured by direct contact with fire.

Burn and Scald Prevention Tips

- Keep hot foods and drinks away from the edges of tables and counter tops.
- Never carry a child while holding hot items.
- Never let young children use the microwave to prepare hot foods or drinks.
- Keep children away from the kitchen during food preparation.
- Tuck cords of appliances out of reach of children.
- Never leave irons, hair dryers, or curling irons on around children.
- Set the water heater thermostat to no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Consider installing anti-scald devices on water faucets to stop the flow of water if it gets too hot.
- Lock up matches, lighters, gasoline and chemicals.
- Cover electrical outlets when not in use.
- Do not let children use electrical appliances.
- Take your family to see a professional fireworks display instead of using consumer fireworks.