



## How to prevent scald burn injuries in children

Scald burns are burns caused by hot liquid. Toddlers and young children are most at risk for scald burns because they are curious, do not sense danger and are able to reach and grab things they find interesting. In addition, their skin is thinner than older children and adults, so the burns they suffer are deeper, more severe injuries.

Burns happen quickly. It takes just three seconds for a child to get a third degree burn from 140-degree tap water. Hot tap water burns cause more deaths and hospitalizations than burns from any other hot liquids.

According to Andrea Winthrop, MD, medical director of Trauma at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, the majority of children ages 4 and younger who are hospitalized for burn-related injuries suffer from scald burns.

Most accidental burns occur at home. The good news is almost 75 percent of all burns in children can be prevented.

### Preventing scald burns

Follow these tips to stay safe from scald burns:

#### *General:*

- Make sure your hot water heater is set no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Never leave small children alone in the kitchen or bathroom.
- When working with a hot liquid, keep children safely away from the source.

#### *Bathroom:*

- Before placing a child or infant in a bathtub, check the water temperature with your hand to make sure it isn't too hot. Run your hand up and down the length of the tub to distribute warm water evenly.
- When in the bathtub, keep children away from the bathtub faucet to prevent them from turning on the hot water.
- Warn children never to run the bath water themselves.
- Never leave a young child unattended in the bathtub.

#### *Kitchen:*

- Never allow children to play in the kitchen when adults are cooking.
- When cooking, keep pot handles turned inward on the stovetop and away from the edge of the stove.
- Never handle hot liquids or food while holding a child.
- Never leave hot drinks or food near the edge of the table or counter within a child's reach.
- If you have a toddler or small child at home, avoid using a tablecloth. The child may pull on the corner of the tablecloth causing potentially hot objects to fall on him or her.
- When cooking with hot oil or a deep fryer, keep your child a safe distance away.
- If you use a microwave to heat a child's food, test the temperature before giving it to the child. Although the container may seem cool, microwaves heat food much hotter than stoves. Heating formula or milk in a microwave particularly can be dangerous because the liquid does not heat evenly. Hot spots can remain and burn a child.
- Do not allow young children to prepare food on the stove or use the microwave.