

# Preventing burns and scalds

Every year over 1,000 children under 15 years of age are admitted to burns units across Australia and New Zealand. Most child burn injuries occur in the home, with the kitchen the most common place that these happen.

The major causes of burn and scald injuries include hot drinks, water from a saucepan/kettle/jug/billy/urn, hot food, coals/ashes, water from the tap/shower/bath, hot fat/oil, vehicle exhausts, treadmills and campfires/bonfires.

## Understanding the dangers

- A child's skin is thinner and more sensitive than an adult's.
- At 60°C hot water takes just one second for a toddler to suffer a life-threatening burn; at 50°C, it takes five minutes.

## Safety tips

- It's safest for everyone to finish or put away their hot drinks before they hold a baby or child.
- Always check the temperature of the water before bathing your baby or child. The water should be no more than 38°C. Fill the bath with cold water first, then add hot water and mix well. Run cold water through the tap last so the tap isn't hot.
- Limit the delivery temperature of hot water in your bathroom taps to a maximum of 50°C. This is mandatory for new homes. If the water delivery temperature hasn't been turned down, a licensed plumber can fix this for you
- Keep everyday objects that could burn to your child, such as clothes irons, hair straighteners and heaters, out of reach.



- Use safety products such as gates to keep babies and young children out of the kitchen, and stove guards to help prevent children pulling pots and pans down on top of themselves.
- There has been an increase over the last few years in burns from BBQs, pizza ovens and fire pits. Always closely supervise children around these items.

## First aid for a burn or scald



If a burn or scald does occur, it's important to remember to **Remove, Cool, Cover and Seek**:

- **Remove** - remove yourself from danger. Remove any clothing and jewellery from the burn area unless well stuck to the skin.
- **Cool** - place the burn under cool running water for 20 minutes. Never use items like ice, oil or butter on a burn as these can make it worse.
- **Cover** the burn with a clean dressing.
- **Seek** medical attention if the burn or scald is on the face, hands, feet, genitals or buttocks, is larger than a 20-cent coin or blistered.