

Burn Injury Prevention



Burn injuries are one of the most devastating of all injuries suffered by children. They are caused from exposure to fire, heat, or a heat-producing agent. The majority of burn injuries that occur in the home can be prevented.

Younger children are more likely to sustain injuries from scald burns that are caused by hot liquids or steam. Older children are more likely to sustain injuries from flame burns that are caused by direct contact with fire.

The following are a few tips to help keep your children safe from burns:

Electrical

- To prevent electrical burns, put covers on any electrical outlets that a child can reach.
- Throw out electrical cords that are frayed or damaged in any way.

Fireplaces and Heaters



- Use space heaters carefully and teach children to stay away from them.
- Ensure a fire guard is fixed securely to prevent children accessing the fireplace.

In the Kitchen

- Cooking fires are the leading cause of house fires.
- Don't let small children play near the stove when it is in use.
- When cooking, keep pot handles turned inward on the stove top and away from the edge of the stove.
- Install stove and oven guards.
- Never leave food unattended on a stove.
- Keep cooking areas free of towels and other



flammable objects. Put out a small fire on a stove by sliding a lid over the flames.

- Don't wear clothing with long, loose sleeves when you are cooking.
- If you have a toddler or small child at home, avoid using a tablecloth. If a child pulls on the corner of the tablecloth hot objects might fall on them.
- Do not use a microwave oven to warm baby bottles. The liquid may heat up unevenly and scald your baby's mouth.

Around the Home

- Unplug hot irons, such as clothes irons or curling irons, and keep them out of reach of children.
- Store matches and lighters in a locked cabinet or where children can't reach them.
- Never leave candles unattended. Blow them out when you leave the room.
- Dispose of used cigarettes carefully. Fires caused by smoking materials are the leading cause of deaths in house fires.
- Before using barbecues or grills, clean them of grease build up. Keep children away from hot barbecues.
- Store harmful chemicals and cleaners in an area where children cannot access them.

In the Car

- Never leave a child in the car.
- Before putting a child into a car seat, touch the seat to see how hot it is. Hot seat-belt straps or buckles can burn a child. Cover the car seat with a towel when parking in the sun.

Out and About

- Make sure you apply sunscreen to your children whenever they are in the sun.
- Supervise children near fireworks.
- Encourage children to wear shoes in the summer and remind them not to walk on hot surfaces such as asphalt or hot sand.



Use Smoke Alarms

Install smoke alarms on all levels in the home and near rooms where people sleep.

- Smoke alarms should be tested every month to ensure that the battery and the alarm sounder are working.
- Smoke alarms with removable alkaline batteries, should have the battery replaced once a year.
- Smoke alarms that use a lithium battery do not need replacing annually. The whole unit needs to be replaced every 10 years.
- Replace all your smoke alarm with a new unit every 10 years. Smoke alarms do not last forever because the sensitivity in all smoke alarms will reduce over time.
- All smoke alarms will sound a short beep approximately every 60 seconds to alert you that the battery power is low and the battery needs replacing. See the manufacturer's specifications for instructions.

Learn to Stop Burns

The Burns Unit and Kids Health at The Children's Hospital at Westmead together with Kidsafe NSW and the NSW Severe Burn Injury Service have produced an interactive burns prevention program.



The game allows entry to a virtual home where individual rooms may be navigated to search for the potential burn dangers in everyday life. To access the game visit chw.edu.au

For further information:

Refer to information sheets:

- *Scald Injury Prevention*
- *Preventing Scalds from Hot Foods*
- *Heater and Fireplace Safety*

available to download from kidsafensw.org

Visit the NSW Fire Brigade website
nswfb.nsw.gov.au

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