

# Scald Injury Prevention



A scald is a burn injury caused by hot liquid, hot vapour or steam. For babies and young children, scalds are commonly associated with:

- Hot drinks such as tea and coffee
- Water being boiled for drinks
- Hot cooking oil and liquid
- Hot food
- Running hot tap water
- Hot bath water

Many Australian children under 5 years of age attend hospital emergency departments each year for the treatment of burns and scalds.

About 1 in 4 of these children have to be admitted to hospital.

Of the young children admitted to hospital for burns and scalds, 1 in 5 are injured so severely that they need to be in hospital for at least a week.

Most children hospitalised for burns and scalds need repeat visits. Many of them need multiple operations.

## In the Kitchen

Many scalds occur in and around the kitchen. Sometimes a young child will pull down hot items and sometimes a slightly older child wants to help you.

Electric kettles pulled by the cord, saucepans or cooking implements pulled by the handle, and plates of hot food on the table often burn children.

Scalds can involve relatively large amounts of very hot liquid falling onto the child's head and upper body.

## Safe Practices

- Keep young children out of the kitchen or cooking areas during meal preparation.
- Keep kettles, jugs and teapots away from the edge of benches and tables.
- Prevent cords dangling where a child can reach them by using hooks, curled cords or a cordless kettle.
- Keep hot kettles out of children's reach.
- Install a stove guard to prevent children pulling objects off the cook top.
- Use an oven guard to limit heat from oven door.
- Turn saucepan/frypan handles away from the stove-front. When possible use the rear hot plates on the stove, rather than the front ones.
- Carry plates to the stove, rather than the hot saucepan to the plates.



**child safety is no accident**

## Learn to Stop Burns!



### 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 developed 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](http://chw.edu.au)



For further information refer to information sheets and brochure available to download from [kidsafensw.org](http://kidsafensw.org)

- *Burn Injury Prevention*
- *Preventing a Scald Injury from Hot Food and Drink*
- *Hot Water burns like fire*

Visit the Children's Hospital at Westmead website [chw.edu.au](http://chw.edu.au)



## Hot Tap Water Scalds

The bathroom accounts the majority of hot tap water scalds.

Scalds are often caused when a child falls or is placed into hot water already in a bathtub. They can also occur when a child is in the bath and the hot water is turned on. Scalds also happen in the shower and the hand basin.

### Safe Practices

- Control the temperature of your bathroom hot tap water to **a maximum of 50°C**. This temperature is required for new homes under the plumbing code. Your licensed plumber can tell you how best to achieve this.
- Always test the water's temperature before bathing a child. Use the inside of your wrist. Hold it in the water for a slow count of five. It should be comfortably warm, not hot. Note: the maximum recommended temperature for bathing a baby is 38°C.
- When running a bath always run the cold water first (and turn it off last).
- Child resistant taps/tap covers can help, but won't stop a child falling into a bath that is already run.
- Always stay with children when they are in the bathroom. Take them with you if you have to leave the room. Avoid leaving younger children in the care of older children.
- Turn taps off, tightly, and keep the bathroom door closed when it is not being used.



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Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia