



## Tipsheet: Preventing Contact Burns & Scalds

Children most often suffer burns and scalds in their homes. Young children are at greater risk from burn injuries because their skin is thinner than adult skin. Even after 15 minutes, a cup of tea can still be hot enough to scald a child seriously.

Severe burn injuries are extremely painful and require lengthy treatment. They can even result in permanent disability and disfigurement.

Statistics show that at least half of all burn accidents can be prevented. You can protect your child from burns and scalds by making some simple changes in your home.

### Keeping your child safe

- Do not leave hot cups or pots of tea where a child can reach them.
- Put lighters and matches well out of a child's reach.
- Rid your household of non child resistant lighters, and ensure that new lighters purchased meet EU child resistant standards. 35% of lighters tested are still found to be unsafe.
- Do not leave burning cigarettes or candles unattended.
- Keep children well away from grills.
- Children should never handle fireworks. Only adults should deal with firework displays and the lighting of fireworks.
- Supervise children using sparklers. Show older children how to hold sparklers at arm's length.
- Never give sparklers to children under five years old.
- Keep your child out of the sun for long periods of time, especially during the hottest periods of the day. Ensure your child wears a sun hat and sun protection cream.

### Preventing tap water scalds

- Set your water heater to 50°C maximum. If you cannot change the heater's temperature, install thermostatic mixing valves (which reduce temperature at the tap).
- Teach your child to turn on the cold water first and then turn on the hot water slowly.

Turn off the hot water first.

- Before bathing children in heated water, always run your open hand through the water or use a bath thermometer to check its temperature.
- Remember that your child's skin requires cooler water than your own. What may just feel warm to you might be painfully hot to your child.
- Never leave one or more young children unattended in the bath, especially when the water is running.

### In the kitchen

- Use the rear burners of the stove when cooking, especially when boiling.
- Turn pot handles in toward the middle of the cooker so children don't knock into them or reach for them.
- Ensure the wires on electric kettles do not hang over the edge of the counter.
- If you have a young child, avoid using tablecloths on kitchen tables.
- Keep hot objects, foods and liquids away from table edges and counter edges.
- Never carry children and hot foods or liquids at the same time.
- Before moving a pot of boiling water, or another hot item, be sure no obstacles, including your child, are between you and the sink.

### What to do in an emergency

- Reduce the heat of a burnt or scalded area by immersing in cold water or by holding it under the cold running tap for at least 10 minutes. Do not apply lotions or creams.
- Take your child to the hospital for anything more than a very small burn or scald. Cover the affected area with a clean, plastic bag or clingfilm to reduce the risk of infection.
- Take a basic first aid course for more information about how to deal with an emergency.

[Further European Child Safety Alliance Tip and Factsheets](#)

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