



## Burns, Scalds and the Risks for Your Child

Every year hundreds of Australian children go to hospital because they have suffered a burn or a scald.

### Where is the danger?

**Hot drinks:** Never drink a hot drink while holding your child for feeding. Give your baby to someone else to hold or ensure that you put hot drinks down in the middle of a table, out of child's reach, or at the back of a bench.

**Hot food:** Test the temperature of soups, stews and other liquid-based dishes before serving them. Preferably, heat your child's bottle in a bottle warmer, but if you use a microwave: stir the food or shake the bottle after heating; leave it to rest for a few minutes; and always test the temperature before serving.

**Bathrooms:** Electric systems will let you set the precise temperature for hot water – no more than 50°C is recommended; gas systems or systems without a temperature gauge are best set between low and medium. When bathing your child the water temperature should be no more than 38°C; 36°C for newborns.

**Kitchens:** Don't let appliance cords hang down and turn saucepan handles towards the inside of the stove. Install a stove guard and, as much as possible, keep your child out of the kitchen when you are cooking.

**Other household areas:** Our homes are full of items that can cause burns and scalds.

- Iron while your children are asleep, in a playpen, or put yourself and the iron in the playpen. Leave the iron out of children's reach while it cools.
- Install guards on heaters and open fireplaces.
- Supervise children closely around barbecues and while the barbecue cools.
- Domestic treadmills can cause friction burns. Use your treadmill behind safety barriers or somewhere children can't access. Ensure that you can see any child approaching and that the machine is unplugged when not in use.

### What to do if a burn occurs

You should call 000 immediately if: your child is unconscious; your child has difficulty breathing; your child has pain that you cannot control; the burn is to the face, airways, hands, bottom or genitals; the burn is larger than the size of your child's palm.

If you are providing first aid:

- As soon as possible after the accident, spray, pour or gently sponge the burn area with cold water for up to 20 minutes. This treatment is still useful for three hours after the accident.
- Do not apply ice, iced water, creams, lotions, moisturisers, powders, butter, flour or ointments.
- Keep your child warm while you are cooling their burn by wrapping them in a blanket and/or heating the room to 28-30°C and do not cool the wound for longer than 20 minutes.

*This Parent Fact Sheet is available in different community languages and can be downloaded along with references from the Early Childhood Connections website [www.econnections.com.au](http://www.econnections.com.au)*

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