

If your child is scalded, take the following steps:

### Remove clothing

Quickly take off all your child's clothing.

- clothes hold in the heat and can make a scald worse.
- clothes can also hide other areas of the skin which are scalded.

### Apply cold water

Immediately put the scalded area in cool water, or run cool water over it for about 10 minutes. It may help to cuddle your child under a cool shower while the water runs over the scald.

Cooling the scald is very important as it prevents the heat from burning into the skin's deeper layers.

NEVER USE ICE. Children have been dangerously chilled in baths of iced water. Ice applied to scalded skin can cause further damage to the skin.

### Remove anything tight

... such as jewellery, bracelets etc. Scalds quickly cause the skin and tissue underneath to swell.

### Cover the scald

If the scald is on the face, cover it with a clean, damp cotton cloth. If the scald is on any other part of the body, cover it with clean plastic cling wrap, then with a clean damp cotton pillow case or sheet. This will reduce the pain and the risk of infection.

NEVER use butter, oils, toothpaste, creams or ointments to cover the burn. These may hold in the heat and cause further damage to the skin.

### Go to your doctor or the hospital

Take your child to your doctor or hospital if the skin is broken or for anything other than a small scald. Infection may change a superficial burn into a deep burn.

Kidsafe  
**(08) 8204 6318**

Child and Youth Health.  
Parent Helpline  
( 24 hour service)  
**1300 364 100**

For information about  
regulating hot water  
temperature, contact the  
Master Plumbers Association  
**(08) 8352 8777**

# Hot Water Burns Like Fire!!



ACCIDENT PREVENTION FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA



# What is a Scald?

**A scald is a type of burn caused by hot water or other hot liquids.**

The severity of the burn depends on the temperature of the liquid and the length of time the skin is exposed to the hot liquid.

**For example:**

## Approximate Time for a Serious Scald to Happen to a Child

Type of Liquid	Temp	Time
Boiling water from a kettle	100 °C	under 1 second
Cup of hot tea/coffee	70-95 °C	under 1 second
Hot water from the tap	60 °C	1 second
Hot water from a kettle 5 -10 minutes after boiling	55 °C	10 seconds
Hot water from a tap with a temperature regulator	50 °C	5 minutes

**To test the temperature of your hot water, you can get a temperature card from Kidsafe (SA) by ringing (08) 8204 6318 during office hours.**

Cups of hot tea/coffee and hot water from kettles are the most common causes of hospital admissions for childhood scalds.

Scalds from hot water in baths are less common, but usually more serious.

Half of the children admitted to hospital with scalds need to have surgery for skin grafting.

All these children will suffer scarring.

Why are young children more at risk of being seriously scalded? Because they:

- like to climb and are naturally curious
- can move very fast
- don't understand danger
- are not able to control their environment
- have thinner skin than adults, so it burns more deeply in less time.

## How can I reduce the risk of my child being scalded?

### Kitchen

- When cooking, ensure your child is safe by placing a child safety barrier across the kitchen door to keep them out of the kitchen, or place them in a playpen, stroller or high chair away from cooking areas or cords.
- Keep kettles/jugs and teapots away from the edge of benchtops.
- Keep cords to kettles/jugs and other electrical appliances short or use coiled cords.
- Turn saucepan handles inward so they don't go over the edge of the stove top.
- Use a stove guard.
- Allow free bench space near the stove, so that you don't have to carry hot pots and dishes across the kitchen.
- Ensure your stove is fixed to the wall or use an oven door lock to prevent your child climbing onto the oven door and pulling the stove over.
- NEVER leave a bucket of hot water on the floor where your child can get to it.



### Hot Drinks

- When making tea/coffee, keep the mugs or cups well back from the edge of the bench.
- NEVER put hot drinks in a child's regular cup.
- Use a non-slip placemat instead of a tablecloth.
- Keep hot drinks in the centre of the table.
- Only drink your tea/coffee when your child is NOT in your arms or on your lap.
- NEVER let a child sip a hot drink from your mug.

### Bathroom

- ALWAYS run cold water into a bath first. Remember that in hot weather, water from the cold tap can often be very hot.
- ALWAYS check the temperature of the bath before placing your child in it.
- Regulate the hot water delivered to your bathroom to 50 °C. Contact the Master Plumbers Association or Kidsafe for advice.
- To prevent your child from turning on the hot water tap, cut a slit in the side of a plastic drink bottle, then cover the handle with the bottle.
- NEVER, even for a second, leave a young child unattended by an adult in a bathroom.
- NEVER leave a young child in the care of another child who may turn on the hot water tap.