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Safety Facts on Scald Burns

Hot Liquids Burn like Fire

Over 500,000 scald burns occur annually in the United States.

The two highest risk populations are children under the age of 5 and adults over 65.

Did you know...

- Hot liquids can cause life-threatening burn injuries.
- Scalds are the number-one cause of burn injury to children under age 4.
- Burn accidents frequently occur when parents or caregivers are in a hurry, angry, or under a lot of pressure.
- Coffee, tea, soup and hot tap water can be hot enough to cause serious burn injury.
- Scald and steam burns are often associated with microwave oven use.
- When tap water reaches 140° F, it can cause a third degree (full thickness) burn in just five seconds.
- Hot tap water accounts for 17% of all childhood scald hospitalizations.

Most Scald Injuries can be Prevented

SCALDS IN THE KITCHEN

How to prevent injury from hot foods and beverages:

- Continuous and adequate supervision of children in the kitchen is of prime importance.
- As a child's mobility and curiosity increases, appropriate supervision becomes essential. Control a young child's activity while he/she is in the kitchen and when food is being prepared. High chairs, feeding tables, etc. can control children and allow supervision during daily kitchen activities.
- Keep children out of the "traffic path" and check for their location before moving any hot liquids in the kitchen.
- Keep all hot liquids at a safe distance from children.
- Take time to fix meals without rushing.
- Keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove. Cook on rear burners when possible.
- Use a "fill-through-the-spout" teapot, the kind without a lid and with a whistle in the spout, to prevent "spilled water" scalds in the kitchen.

Hot Issue
PA Passes Fire Safe Cigarette Legislation:

All cigarettes sold in Pennsylvania as of Jan. 1, 2009 are required to be "fire safe" under a bill signed into law by Governor Rendell and praised by PA State Fire Commissioner, Edward A. Mann. Cigarettes are the leading cause of home fire fatalities in the United States every year, killing smokers and nonsmokers alike! "Fire-safe" cigarettes are rolled with bands of less porous, slow-burning paper, so if the cigarette is left unattended, it will go out when it burns down to one of those bands. This is a good step toward preventing hundreds of senseless deaths every year.

The Burn Foundation Summer, 2008 newsletter has been published!

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- Remove tablecloths when toddlers are present in the home. They tug and pull on everything within their reach. Hot liquids can easily be pulled down on them.
- Never hold a child while drinking a hot liquid.
- Purchase appliances with short cords, and keep all cords from dangling over the edge of counters, i.e., slow cookers, coffee pots, fat fryers, and anything that could contain hot liquids.
- Periodically check all handles on appliances and cooking utensils to insure the handles are tightly fastened and will afford proper heat protection.
- Consider marking a "NO ZONE" in front of the kitchen stove. Teach children to remain out of this zone. This can be done with colored tape on the floor.
- Children should not be allowed to use a cooking/heating appliance until they are mature enough to understand safe-use procedures and tall enough to safely reach cooking surfaces and handle hot items.
- Use caution when moving heavy pots of hot liquids from the stove.
- Avoid using area rugs in the kitchen, especially near the stove. They can cause falls and scalds.
- Be sure to inform baby-sitters about kitchen and appliance safety and teach them to prevent burn injuries when preparing meals.

Hot Water Causes Third Degree Burns...

...in 1 second at 156°
 ...in 2 seconds at 149°
 ...in 5 seconds at 140°
 ...in 15 seconds at 133°.

HOT TAP WATER AND SCALD BURNS

Hot tap water is a major cause of burn injury. As with other scald burns, young children and older adults are most at risk.

The following measures will help you prevent or control tap water scalds:

CONTINUOUS AND ADEQUATE SUPERVISION OF YOUNG CHILDREN IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN PREVENTING TAP WATER SCALD BURNS.

- Before placing a child into the bath or getting into the tub yourself, TEST THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WATER by moving your hand rapidly through the water for several seconds. The temperature should not exceed 100° F/39° C. A child's delicate skin will burn more quickly than an adult's.
- Never leave a young child unattended in the bathroom or tub.
- Use extreme caution if bathing small children in the sink. Many sinks have single-lever faucets which are easy for young children to turn on.
- Adjust the thermostat setting on your water heater to produce a water temperature of 120° to 125° or less. The lower the temperature, the lower the risk.
- **Consider installing "anti-scald" devices on tub faucets and shower heads to prevent accidental scalds.**

HOT WATER BURNS ARE 100% PREVENTABLE

1. **Keep hot liquids out of the reach of children.**
 Babies - the most frequent victims of hot liquid scalds - need only a split second to grab a coffee cup, or bump a sipping parent's arm. Spilled hot coffee or tea,

be underfoot while you're carrying pots around the kitchen.

Protect babies or toddlers by placing them in a high chair or playpen during cooking and coffee hours.

2. Supervise children and older people in tub baths.

Young children are able to turn on the hot water by themselves. Elderly or handicapped people are prone to falling. They should never be left alone in the tub, even momentarily. Always test their bath water: it should be about 100°.

3. Set water heater thermostat to safe level.

Most water heaters are set to heat water well above 140°. But a tap water temperature of 120° to 125° should be hot enough for washing clothes and dishes. And few people bathe at temperatures above 110°.

Set your water heater thermostat at low, which is usually about 120° - for safety, and to save 18% of the energy used at 140°. (Although many automatic dishwasher instructions suggest 140°, cleaning is usually satisfactory at much lower temperatures.) If you live in an apartment, and the water is too hot, show this folder to your landlord, and ask that the water temperature be lowered.

4. Check tap water temperature. Let hot water run for three to five minutes. Test the temperature with a candy, meat or water thermometer. Set the temperature on your water heater thermostat. Wait a full day to allow the water temperature to change, then re-test and re-adjust the thermostat, is necessary.

Most people associate burns with flame. In fact, burns are caused more often by liquids than by flames.

USE CARE, AND HOT WATER WILL ALWAYS BE A FRIEND.