

First aid for scalds

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

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 further damage 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, cotton cloth. If the scald is on any other part of the body, cover it with clean plastic cling wrap, or a clean cloth.

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.

Where can I get more information?

SA Health

Women's and Children's Hospital Burns Service
Phone (08) 8161 7000

Royal Adelaide Hospital Burns Unit
Phone (08) 8222 4000

Parent Helpline (24 hr service)
Phone 1300 364 100

Search for 'burns' on these websites:

- > www.wch.sa.gov.au
- > www.cyh.sa.gov.au

Kidsafe

Phone (08) 8161 6318

Plumbing Industry SA

For information about regulating hot water temperature, contact the Plumbing Industry Association of SA.

Phone (08) 8292 4000



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Non-English speaking: for information in languages other than English, call the Interpreting and Translating Centre and ask them to call The Department of Health. This service is available at no cost to you, contact (08) 8226 1990.

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Learn or Burn



Hot water burns like fire



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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

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

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

Many of the children admitted to hospital with scalds need to have surgery for skin grafting. All these children will suffer scarring.

Why are 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 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 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.
- > Place microwaves at a safe height within easy reach for all users and don't leave children unattended with the microwave.

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 50C. 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.