

## Scalds

A scald is a burn injury caused by hot liquid, hot vapour or steam. For young children, scalds are commonly associated with hot drinks; water being boiled for drinks; cooking and hot food; and hot tap water.

Of young children admitted to hospital for scalds, one in five are injured so severely that they need to be in hospital for at least a week.

Most hospitalised children need repeat visits, and often, multiple operations.

Apart from the pain, suffering and scarring that can result, scalds can be expensive to treat. One case of a hot water scalding in the bath involved an initial stay in hospital of 101 days and a medical cost of over \$1 million. Severe scalds can scar a child for life!

### Hot Tap Water Scalds

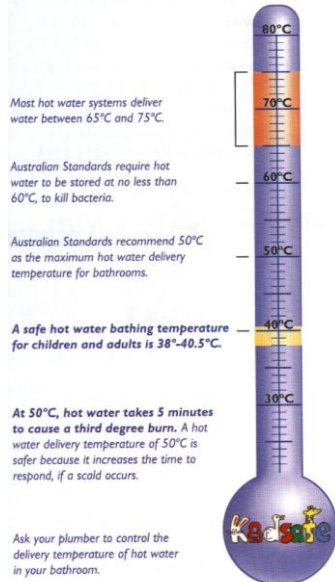
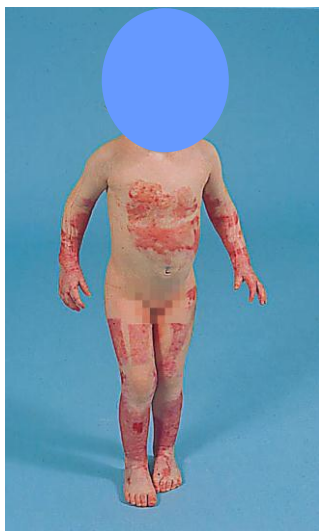
Every year, over 150 children aged 0-4 years are admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital for Children as a result of scalds.

Most serious scalds are caused by hot tap water.

9 out of 10 hot tap water scalds happen in the bathroom

Tap (shower) water scalds require an average of 37 days hospitalisation, bath water and average of 18 days hospitalisation.

**At 60°C, hot water can cause a full thickness (third degree) burn in less than one second!**



### Safety with hot tap water

- Control the temperature of your bathroom hot tap water to a maximum of 50°C. This temperature is required for new homes under the plumbing code. Your licensed plumber can tell you how best to achieve this.
- Always test the water's temperature before bathing a child. Use the inside of your wrist. Hold it in the water for a slow count of five. It should be comfortably warm, not hot. Note: the maximum recommended temperature for bathing a baby is 38°C.
- Child resistant taps/tap covers can help, but won't stop a child falling into a bath that is already run.
- When running a bath always run the cold water first (and turn it off last).
- Always stay with children when they are in the bathroom. Take them with you if you have to leave the room. Avoid leaving them in the care of older kids.
- Turn taps off tightly, and keep the bathroom door closed when not in use.



Tap Covers



Tempering Valve



Continuous Flow Hot Water System

**For more information on Safety Products and recommendations contact Kidsafe WA on 9340 8509.**

### Current Legislation

It is now law in Western Australia (National Plumbing and Drainage Code AS 3500.4.2 1998) that the delivery of hot water be controlled to all sanitary fixtures i.e. baths, basins and showers.

Hot water temperature for all new buildings and all new hot water installations shall not exceed:

- 45°C for early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools and nursing homes or similar facilities for young, aged, sick or disabled persons; and
- 50°C in all other buildings.

NOTE: Compliance with these temperature limits is optional for kitchen sinks and laundry tubs.

**For more information on your hot tap water options contact your licensed plumber displaying the MPA sign of security in your local community newspaper.**

**Hot Water Burns Like Fire:**

**Is your Hot Water Kidsafe?**

## Hot Food and Drink Scalds

Hot drink scalds usually involve a young child pulling a cup down on itself; pulling down on an item (e.g. a tablecloth) that causes a drink to fall; or running into/being held by someone who has a drink and spills it.

Injuries are usually to the head, face, chest and hands.

Hot drink scalds can happen quickly, often with adults nearby who do not realise a child is reaching for the hot drink until it is too late to stop them.

Children aged one to two years are most likely to be scalded in this way.

To a small child the home is full of exciting things to touch, grab and climb. Children may grab hot cups, kettles, pots, pans and taps.

They do not know that hot water burns like fire and can scar for life.

You can stop your child from being scalded by watching them and by making some simple changes in the home.

### Kettles

Children may grab kettle cords

- 👉 Keep kettles, jugs, teapots, coffee plungers and cords away from the edge of the bench.
- 👉 Use a cordless kettle.
- 👉 Buy a curly electric cord or tie your kettle cord out of reach of children.



### Hot Drinks

Children may grab hot drinks

- 👉 Put hot drinks in the centre of the dinner table or somewhere else out of reach.
- 👉 Use non-slip place mats instead of table cloths
- 👉 Give toddlers their own special mug so they do not drink from yours
- 👉 Use broad-based commuter mugs
- 👉 Put your child down before having a hot drink



### Pots and Pans

Children may grab pots and pans

- 👉 Keep young children out of the kitchen while cooking
- 👉 Fit a gate across your kitchen doorway
- 👉 Place children in a playpen or highchair
- 👉 Put your child down before using hot pots, pans and kettles
- 👉 Place microwaves at a safe height. The user's face should be higher than the door.
- 👉 Fit a stove guard around your stove top.
- 👉 Use back hot plates before the front ones.
- 👉 Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove or bench.



### Scalds Facts

- Hot water can scald for up to 30 minutes after it is boiled. A fresh, piping hot drink can scald in a second.
- A cup of hot liquid spilled over a baby or toddler is equivalent to a bucket of hot water being spilled over an adult.

### First Aid for Scalds

1. Remove Wet Clothes
  - This helps the heat to escape from the skin
  - Leave clothing on if stuck to the skin
2. Immediately apply lots of cool water to the scald for 20 minutes
  - Do not use ice or ice water, It will damage the skin
3. Keep the child warm
  - This will help to prevent the child from going into shock.
4. See a doctor if the scald is:
  - On the face, hands, feet, genitals or buttocks
  - Larger than a 20c coin or blistered
  - In an emergency phone 000 for an ambulance

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For more information

☎ (08) 9340 8509

Child Safety Information Line

☎ 1800 802 244

Poisons Information Centre

☎ 13 11 26