

# Burns and Scalds: Prevention

## What are burns and scalds?

A burn is damage to body tissues caused by sunlight, heat (dry or moist), flame, electricity, friction, or chemicals. A scald is a burn caused by hot water or steam. Many burns and scalds happen in the home, and many could be prevented.

## How can burns and scalds be prevented?

- Keep your water heater setting no higher than 120°F (49°C).
- Keep pot handles turned away from the stove front. Don't wear loose sleeves around a stove.
- Never leave a child alone in the bathroom or kitchen. Don't carry hot liquids or food near children and don't allow children near stoves, hot oven doors, hot barbecue grills, heaters, hair dryers, or curling irons.
- Use childproof covers on electrical outlets to prevent electrical burns.
- Avoid having loose, exposed electric wires. Avoid letting electrical cords dangle from appliances (toasters, coffee pots, etc.). Make sure electrical cords are not frayed. Don't overload extension cords.
- Use portable heaters with caution. Keep children as well as bedding, clothing, curtains, and other materials at least 3 feet away from space heaters. Turn off a portable heater every time you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Don't leave household chemicals where they can be knocked over, spilled, or tasted by curious toddlers. Be sure all containers are properly labeled and have secure lids. Never put a household chemical in a common drinking container such as a cup or glass or a large container sometimes used to store drinking water—not even temporarily.
- Don't smoke in bed. Never leave a burning cigarette unattended. Keep ashtrays away from furniture, clothing, and curtains. Never empty smoldering or recently used ashtrays or ashes into a trash can. Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Never leave a burning candle or fireplace fire unattended. Keep candles away from bedding, curtains, paper, or other materials that can catch fire.
- Keep fireplaces and chimneys clean and repaired. Each fireplace should have a fire screen.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and replace the batteries a least once a year.
- Have an escape plan in case of fire in your home. Keep a charged fire extinguisher within easy reach on each level of your home. Know how to use it.
- When you are outdoors, always use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or higher and wear protective clothing. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays. It's best to put the sunscreen on your skin 30 to 60 minutes before you go out into the sun. Put on more sunscreen after water activities or if you are sweating a lot. Avoid being

out in the sun for a long time, especially in the late morning and early afternoon.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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