



Centre Medical and Surgical Associates, P.C.

YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOR LIFE

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Preventing Burns

HOT LIQUIDS BURN LIKE FIRE

Thousands of scald burns occur annually in the U S , and 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 a serious burn injury.
- Scald and steam burns are often associated with microwave oven use.
- When hot tap water reaches 140° F, it can cause a full-thickness, third-degree 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

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, playpens, etc. can control children and allow supervision during daily kitchen activities.

Ways of preventing/controlling scald injuries:

- Keep children out of the "traffic path" and check 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.

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- Test all heated liquid and food before giving it to a child or placing it within his reach.
- Remove tablecloths when toddlers are present in the home. They tug and pull on everything within reach. Hot liquids can easily be pulled down on them.
- Never hold a child while drinking a hot liquid.
- Be sure to inform baby-sitters about kitchen and appliance safety and teach them to prevent burn injuries when preparing meals.
- Purchase appliances with short cords, and keep all cords from dangling over the edge of counters, e.g. slow cookers, coffee pots, fat fryers, and anything else that could contain hot liquids.
- Periodically check all handles on appliances and cooking utensils to ensure the handles are tightly fastened and will afford proper heat protection.
- Use caution when moving heavy pots of hot liquids from the stove.
- 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.
- Avoid using area rugs in the kitchen, especially near the stove. They can cause falls and scalds.

SCALDS AND MICROWAVE OVENS

Burns associated with microwave ovens are increasing. Most of these injuries involve scalds to the hands. While such burns occur at all ages, over 50% of those injured are under 5. Typically, children burn themselves when pulling food or liquids from the microwave.

Microwave ovens are frequently perceived as less dangerous and less risky than conventional heating methods. Many people do not fully appreciate or understand how microwaves heat food. The fact that a food container may not be hot may mislead someone to assume that the food itself is not really hot, and a burn injury results.

Most burns associated with microwave ovens are preventable.

When using a microwave oven, you should:

- Read and follow the directions for the operation of the microwave oven. The specific directions associated with heating prepared or packaged food are equally important to follow.

- Be careful when removing coverings or lids from microwaved foods. Puncture plastic wrap before heating foods in the microwave.
- Remember . . . the fillings in jelly doughnuts and other foods may become very hot, even though the outer portion remains only warm to the touch
- Stir foods to distribute the heat. Many microwave ovens have a tendency to heat from the outside edge toward the middle. This can produce very hot food on the edge and cold food in the middle.
- Extreme caution should be exercised when heating baby bottles or baby food. The amount of food/liquid to be heated, the starting temperature of the food/liquid (refrigerator or room temperature), and the specific microwave energy setting you select will all influence the final temperature. Small amounts of room-temperature food/liquids will require less heating time and lower energy settings to reach a safe temperature.

Heating baby formula in a microwave is a dangerous practice and could result in a scald to the baby's mouth or throat. Even though a bottle might not feel warm to the touch after it has been microwaved briefly, there may be hot spots within the formula. Hot spots are places where the microwaves have reached first or more efficiently, producing uneven heating.

Follow microwave guidelines on baby formulas, baby food jars, plastic bottles and plastic bottle liners. Remember, not all foods can be heated in a microwave oven.

- Baby-sitters, grandparents and other caregivers should be instructed in using your microwave oven before they prepare food or drinks for young children.
- Be sure children are old enough to understand the safe use of the microwave oven before allowing them to heat foods. Children still need adult supervision and help to follow product directions. Children should be tall enough to reach the oven and handle foods safely.

HOT TAP WATER AND SCALD BURNS

Thousands of tap water scald burns occur annually in the U.S., and the two high risk groups are children under the age of 5 and adults over 65. All of these burns are preventable.

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

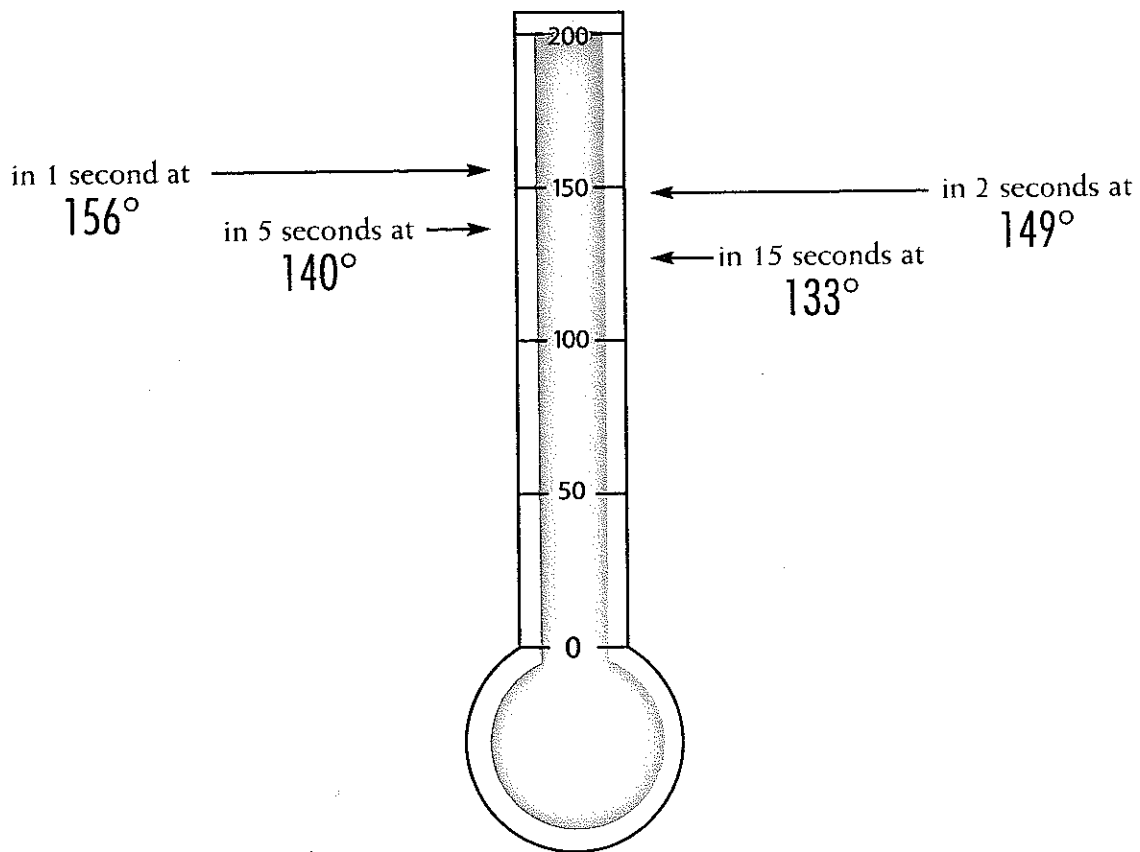
- Continuous and adequate supervision of young children is the single most important factor in preventing tap water scald burns.
- Before placing a child into the bath or getting into the tub yourself, you should test the temperature of the water by moving your hand rapidly through the water for several seconds. The temperature should not exceed 100° F/39° C. A child's delicate skin will burn more quickly than an adult's.

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- 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 small children to turn on.
- Adjust the thermostat setting on your water heater to produce a temperature of 120° to 125° F 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 CAUSES THIRD DEGREE BURNS . . .



Information courtesy of

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