

Burns and Scalds and under 5's

Like most accidents, burns and scalds that occur in the home are mostly preventable.

By following the simple advice given to us by the Child Accident Prevention Trust we can prevent the distress and often life changing effects of burns and scalds.

Care also needs to be taken in the sun. Whilst it is important to expose the skin to sunlight, it is equally important to protect the skin from long-term damage from the sun's harmful UV rays .

Follow the Care In the Sun Code:

- Stay out of the sun when the UV rays are strongest (11am-3pm in Northern Ireland)
- Even on a cool day with light cloud cover, UV radiation can cause skin damage
- Cover up with clothing, hats and sunglasses
- Use a sunscreen with high SPF and UVA protection
- Keep hydrated
- Discourage sunbathing. Practice what you preach – parents are role models

Safe from burns

“Everyone in the burns unit was there because of an accident. In a split second their whole life changed.”

Mum of little boy burned by a hot drink

A small child's skin burns really easily as it's so thin. But it's really simple to make sure it doesn't happen to your child. Here's how:



Hot drinks – stay hot enough to scald a small child even after 15 minutes. 8 to 18 month-olds are most vulnerable as they love to grab.

- Look for safe zones in your house where you know your child can't reach your hot drink
- Try to get into the habit of putting your child down before you pick up your drink.

Hair straighteners – can get as hot as your iron and can still burn 15 minutes after they are switched off.

- Keep straighteners and wands out of reach when you're using them
- Put them in a heat-proof pouch or on a high shelf to cool.

Button batteries – if a child swallows a lithium coin cell battery (the round silver battery like a 5p coin) and it gets stuck in their food pipe, it can burn a hole and cause internal bleeding and even death.

- Keep any loose batteries out of reach and dispose of 'flat' batteries quickly and safely
- Keep objects out of reach if they have button batteries your child can get to.

Cooking – young children don't automatically pull away from something that's burning them. They may forget the rules about not touching hot things.

- Push kettles to the back of the worktop and use the back rings of the cooker first
- If you're able to keep children out of the kitchen when you're cooking, great. Or try to keep them in a highchair or away from the cooker if not.

Bath water – these scalds are really nasty and can happen in seconds.

- Put cold water in first then top up with hot. Then you don't need to worry about there being a scalding bath your child could fall or climb into
- Test the temperature of the water with your elbow before putting your child into the bath
- Stay with your child in the bathroom in case they fiddle with the hot tap.

Fires and heaters – a risk to small children.

- Move cots away from radiators. Then your baby can't get their arm or leg trapped against the heat
- Fit fireguards around fires and heaters.

Find out more

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For further information on resources contact Lisa McAliskey, Community Health Improvement Officer on 028 3756 3952 or lisa.mcaliskey@southerntrust.hscni.net