

BURNS : Prevention + Treatment: Issue 3 • www.2health.com

WHAT IS IT? Burns are injuries to tissues caused by heat, friction, electricity, radiation, or chemicals. Scalds are a type of burn caused by a hot liquid or steam and are the #1 cause of burns to children under age 4. The elderly are also the second group at risk to scalds. **68% of tap water injuries** reported in 15 Canadian hospitals (4 years period), happen to children two years and younger. **84% occur in the home** (52% bathroom, 20% kitchen) and 50% of injuries are to the lower extremity. The injuries happen most often between 4pm-12midnight.

The 2 most common situations of scalds are spilled/ splashed hot liquid and hot water turned on or cold water turned off when the child is already in the bathtub or sink.

SEVERITY OF BURNS & SYMPTOMS - a child's skin is thinner and more sensitive than an adult's, therefore their symptoms will be more severe.

1st degree (superficial) - e.g. overexposure to sun. Skin looks red, sensitive to touch, swollen; **2nd degree (partial thickness)** - e.g. chemical spill on arm. Skin is blistered, looking red, white and swollen; **3rd degree (full thickness)** - e.g. after exposure to 140° F liquid (symptoms appear within 5 seconds). Skin looks charred, may not hurt

TO DO NOW...

- Hot water from all taps should be no more than 49° C or 120° F (electrical hot water tanks needs a professional to lower the temp.)
- Cover all electrical outlets or make them inaccessible (including power bars)
- Remove all poisons from lower shelves - they may cause burns
- Hide matches, lighters, BBQ lighters and teach children the dangers
- Keep candles away from reachable areas and light when supervised
- Cover fireplace with gate
- See Prevention Tips for more

RESOURCES

Children's Safety Association of Canada
www.safekid.org/scaldstat.htm

TOMA Foundation for Burned Children
www.fondtomafound.org

PREVENTION TIPS (Do always)

- > Stay calm around hot liquids and kids - most injuries occur when parents/ caregivers are in a hurry, angry or stressed
- > Keep children away from kitchen & BBQ while cooking, use gates & educate them as age-appropriate
- > Turn pot handles towards back of stove
- > Don't hold or be near children while drinking hot beverages (at a cafe, at the dining table) Similarly, avoid using the cup holder on strollers for hot drinks.
- > Never leave the iron, candles, matches unattended - it takes half a second for the child to grab it or pull the cord.
- > Never put a hot item on a table with a tablecloth - children can pull it on them
- > Keep appliance cords shortened and near the walls
- > Be sun-smart

TREATMENT

Always call EMS/9-1-1 if the burn:

1. Causes breathing difficulties
2. Covers more than one body part or if more than 10% of the skin is burnt
3. Results from chemicals or electricity

CHEMICAL BURN

1. Wear protective equipment
 2. Flush area with running water for 15 minutes
 3. Remove contaminated clothing
- If the burn was caused by a dry chemical, brush off excess chemical before flushing with water.
4. Call EMS/ 9-1-1

ELECTRICAL/ LIGHTNING BURN

1. Protect yourself and make sure there is no danger of electricity
2. Check ABCs
3. Assume possible head/ spine injury
4. Entry and exit points will have open wounds - cover gently and protect
4. Call EMS/ 9-1-1

THERMAL BURN (liquid, steam, flame, hot metal or glass)

1. Treat according to severity of burn and only remove clothing that is not stuck to the skin:
1st degree - Cool the area with cool water or cloth for 10-20 min., cover and watch for infection
2nd degree - Cool the area and carefully cover the area with sterile dry dressing. Do not puncture blisters
3rd degree - Check ABCs and treat for shock
 2. Call EMS/9-1-1 if > 10% of skin is burnt & ABC is compromised
- Most burns may be combined with poisoning, head injuries, wounds, and breathing/ circulation difficulties, call EMS/ 9-1-1 always.

this month's

FIRST AID PRACTISE

What did you learn from the past 2HEALTH First Aid Bulletins? Solve this situation!

? You are driving and you suddenly realize your child passenger is unconscious while restrained in the car. You see vomit, so you suspect an airway obstruction. How do you rescue her? You only have 60 seconds! *Answer in the next bulletin*

This monthly 2HEALTH First Aid + Wellness Bulletin helps update your skills and keeps you First Aid savvy. Pass this on to friends!

2HEALTH helps thousands of people become rescue-confident since 1992 - in their home or office.

2HEALTH First Aid & CPR training is practical, fun + Red Cross certified.

Resource of the month:

www.sickkids.ca/SKCFForParents

Next bulletin: First Aid Kits + Preparing for an Emergency

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contact Kavita for questions about this Bulletin and for in-home or in-office First aid training