

Scalds are the leading cause of burn center admits in Oklahoma for children under 5 years of age.

Many injuries happen in predictable, preventable ways.

Provide constant supervision for young children, especially in the bathtub, sink, kitchen, or near hot foods or drinks.

Scald Prevention for Young Children

- More than half of all burn center admits for young children in Oklahoma are for a scald injury.
- One-third of these scald injuries involved heated water, and half involved some other hot liquid such as coffee, tea, soup, grease, etc.
- The vast majority of children were burned while at home.
- On average, children suffering a severe scald injury were burned over 10% of their body and were hospitalized for 5 days.

Prevention

Unintentional tap water scalds can be prevented by following these tips:

- Lower the temperature of the water heater to no more than 120° F.
- Always check the temperature of the water before placing a child in a bath.
- Do not leave a child unattended in the bathtub or sink.
- When giving children a bath, do not allow them to be supervised by anyone other than an adult.
- When soaking materials in a sink or a bathtub or when running bath water, shut or lock the door to keep children from contact with hot water.

Other scalds can be prevented by:

- Providing constant supervision for children.
- Caregivers not drinking hot beverages like coffee and tea, or eating hot foods while holding an infant or young child.
- Allowing food or drink to cool out of reach of young children.
- Keeping the kitchen off limits to children while food is being prepared.
- Placing pan and pot handles towards the back of the stove where little hands cannot reach them.
- Not allowing the cord to any household appliances to hang free and in the reach of children.
- Not holding a child while cooking food or preparing bottles.
- Finding a safe place for hot grease to cool.

If a scald occurs, actions that may lessen the severity of a burn include:

- Removing clothing to stop on-going heat injury.
- Slowly cooling the injury with tap water for 30 minutes. Cooling decreases the depth of burning and is the appropriate first aid for all thermal burns.
- Ice should NOT be used because of the risk of producing hypothermia. Ice may also shut down circulation to the damaged skin and increase the death of tissue.
- Butter and other types of salves should NOT be used on scald injuries.

Internet Resources

- <http://www.firesafekid.org/scald-prevention>
- <http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files//PDF/Public%20Education/ScaldPrevention.pdf>
- <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/fire-burn-and-scalds/>

Live Injury-Free!