

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>
- https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/burn_prevention.html
- <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/fire-burn-and-scalds/>

Live Injury-Free!