In an emergency

- cool the burn immediately under the cold water tap for at least 10 minutes
- once cooled, remove clothing from the burned area. If material is sticking to the skin, cut around the fabric
- if it still hurts cool again under cold water
- don't touch the burn or burst any blisters as this can cause infection
- cover the burn with clean, non-fluffy material to prevent infection, cling film is ideal
- get advice from a doctor or accident and emergency department at your local hospital.

burns and scalds – how safe is your child?

a safety guide for parents and carers of babies and young children

capt is a charity committed to reducing childhood injury.

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Every year over 41,000 children under the age of 14 go to hospital because of home accidents involving burns and scalds. The vast majority of these children are under five years old.

Cooking, eating or kitchen equipment along with food and drink account for nearly 50% of burns and scalds injuries to children that occur in the home. Find out how taking a few simple safety measures can help to make your home a safer place for children.

In the home – general safety tips

- Fit a smoke alarm on each floor level. Check that it works every month and replace batteries if necessary. Chances of surviving a fire when you are asleep are almost zero if you don’t have a working smoke alarm. If it keeps going off, don’t disconnect it, ask the Fire Brigade about the best place to put it.
- Shut all doors at night. In the event of a fire this helps to hold it back and stop it spreading.
- Do a safety check each night. Always put out candles and switch off electrical appliances wherever possible.
- Prepare an escape plan with children and practice it regularly so that they know exactly what to do in the event of a fire.
- Never drink hot tea or coffee with a baby or young child on your lap and keep hot drinks out of their reach – hot liquid scalds up to 20 minutes after it has boiled.
- Fit fireguards to all fires and heaters and don’t dry clothes or warm them on the fireguard – clothes can easily catch fire.
- Store matches and lighters out of young children’s sight and reach. Look for child resistant lighters when buying them.

In the kitchen

Teach children over the age of seven years to do simple tasks like using a toaster and microwave safely. As children grow up gradually teach them to pour from a kettle and use a cooker.

- Avoid having young children in the kitchen unless they are supervised.
- Keep young children away from the front of the oven – the door can get very hot.
- Use a kettle with a short or curly flex.
- Turn saucepan handles towards the back of the cooker and use the back rings wherever possible.
- Never leave a chip pan unattended or fill the pan more than one third full of oil. Use a thermostatically controlled deep fat fryer, if possible. Replace with oven chips, they are safer.
- Avoid warming babies’ bottles in the microwave, the milk may heat up unevenly leaving ‘spots’ of very hot milk which can scald a baby’s mouth.
- Keep a British Standard approved fire blanket nearby.

In the bathroom

- Never leave a baby or young child alone in the bath – even for a moment.
- Turn your hot water thermostat down so that hot water coming out of taps is less than 45°C (113°F) to avoid scalding young children.
- Always put cold water into a bath first, then add hot water and test the water before a child uses it.

In the garden or yard

- Keep children away from barbecues, bonfires and fireworks.

In the sun

Children’s skin is very sensitive and the sun can burn it even when the weather is hazy. This can affect the risk of skin cancer later in life.

- Where possible, keep young children out of the sun between 11am and 3pm. Make sure they are fully covered with loose clothing, pram hoods or hats.
- Always use at least a 15 SPF (sun protection factor) cream and check the sell-by date before use.