

PROTECTING AMERICA'S CHILDREN

Shriners Hospitals For Children Say Save Kids From Scalds

(NAPSA)—Parents can protect their youngsters from a surprising danger. Every day, 300 young children with burn injuries are taken to emergency rooms. They haven't even been near a flame. The children are victims of scalds.


Scald burns (caused by hot liquids, steam or foods) are the most common burn injury among children age 4 and younger. U.S. hospitals treat an estimated 16,000 children under 5 for scalds a year, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Mortality rates from scalds are highest for children under age 4.

While the injuries and the numbers are distressing, even more disturbing is that many of these burns could have been prevented.

That's why Shriners Hospitals for Children, a network of 22 pediatric specialty hospitals in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and members of Shriners of North America, the fraternity that supports the hospitals, emphasize "Heat. It Doesn't Take Flames to Burn" in an intense national campaign that highlights the importance of learning about scald injuries and keeping children safe.

How Scalds Happen

Ninety-five percent of scalds occur in residences. Scald burns are typically related to ordinary activities—bathing, cooking and eating—and often happen to children because of a lapse in adult supervision or a lack of protective measures. Youngsters may not understand or even be aware of potential dangers of hot liquids (especially

Scald burns are typically related to ordinary activities—bathing, cooking and eating—and often happen to children because of a lapse in adult supervision or a lack of protective measures. 

water) and foods; they simply trust adults to keep them safe.

In addition, young children have thinner skin that burns more quickly than adults'. People of all ages can be burned in 30 seconds by a flowing liquid that is 130° F; at 140° F, it takes only five seconds; at 160° F, it only takes one second. For children under 5, these temperatures can cause a burn in half the time.

Preventing Scalds

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, most scalds occur while bathing. Continuous supervision of young children is the most important factor in preventing tap-water scald injuries, but there are additional simple preventive measures that can be taken. These include lowering the temperature settings on water heaters to 120° F or less and installing anti-scald devices on water faucets and showerheads. When bathing a child, fill the bathtub with cold water first. Mix in warmer water carefully and place the child away from the faucet. The bathwater temperature should be about 100° F. Test the water temperature by moving

a hand rapidly through the water. If the water feels hot to an adult, it is too hot for a child.

Some tips to prevent scalds in the kitchen include testing heated food and liquids before serving children and keeping young children away from cooking and sink areas when in use. Also, be aware that toddlers can pull on tablecloths and appliance cords, spilling hot items on themselves, so it's important to keep foods and liquids away from the edges of counters and tables. Another safety tip is to avoid using area rugs in the kitchen. They can contribute to falls and, secondarily, scalds.

Recognized as leaders in pediatric burn care, Shriners Hospitals operates three hospitals specifically dedicated to treating children with burn injuries. These hospitals are in Boston, Cincinnati and Galveston, Texas. A fourth facility, in Sacramento, Calif., specializes in burn injuries and orthopaedic conditions. Because of strides made in both research and clinical care since these hospitals first opened, a burned child's chance of survival has more than doubled.

Children up to age 18 with burn injuries of all degrees, orthopaedic conditions, spinal cord injuries and cleft lip and palate are eligible for admission and receive all care at no charge—regardless of financial need or relationship to a Shriner.

For more information about Shriners Hospitals for Children, visit www.shrinershq.org.

