Scald burns are preventable!

Young children, older adults and people with disabilities are most vulnerable to this type of injury. Most burn injuries happen in the home with tap water scalds occurring in the bathroom or other bathing areas. Other scalds relating to preparation or serving of food occur in the kitchen.

Nationwide, nearly 24,000 children are treated in hospital emergency departments every year for scald injuries. Scalds are the number one cause of burn injury to children under age four. Young children have thinner skin resulting in deeper burns at lower temperatures than adults.

**Water temperature Time required for a third degree burn to occur**

- 155° F - 1 second
- 148° F - 2 seconds
- 140° F - 5 seconds
- 133° F - 15 seconds
- 127° F - 1 minute
- 124° F - 3 minutes
- 120° F - 5 minutes
- 100° F - Safe temperature for bathing
SCALDS

SCALD STATISTICS

- 250,000 children between ages 0-17 are burned each year seriously enough to require medical attention.
- 15,000 children are hospitalized annually with burn injuries.
- 1,100 children die each year from fire and burns.
- 200,000 children are burned by contact with hot substances and objects.
- 100,000 scalds result from spilled food and beverages. The most frequent sources of these injuries include:
  » Child pulls a pot or other container of hot liquid off the stove or counter.
  » Toddler bumps into an adult carrying or holding a hot beverage or food.
  » Toddler pulls tablecloth, spilling hot food or beverage off the table.
  » 5,000 children are scalded from hot tap water.

The most frequent causes of tap water scalds include:
- Unattended child in bath turns hot water faucet or falls into hot water.
- Inexperienced caretaker fails to test water temperature before placing child in tub.

In the following pages, you will find several ways that you can help to prevent these devastating burn injuries....
SCALDS

Tap water scalds are often more severe than cooking-related scalds. Nationwide, tap water scalds result in more inpatient hospitalizations, generally cover a larger percent of the person’s body, and result in more fatalities than other types of scalds. The American Burn Association recommends the following simple safety tips to decrease the risk to yourself and those you love from tap water scalds.

- **Set home water heaters no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit / 48 degree Celsius.** An easy method to test this is to allow hot water to run for three to five minutes, then test with a candy, meat or water thermometer. Adjust the water heater and wait a full day to allow the temperature to change. Re-test and re-adjust as necessary.

- **Provide constant adult supervision** of young children or anyone who may experience difficulty removing themselves from hot water on their own. Gather all necessary supplies before placing child in the tub, and keep them within easy reach.

- **Fill tub to desired level before getting in. Run cold water first, then add hot. Turn off the hot water first.** This can prevent scalding in case someone should fall in while the tub is filling. Mix the water thoroughly and check the temperature by moving your elbow, wrist or hand with spread fingers through the water before allowing someone to get in.

- **Avoid flushing toilets, running water or using the dish- or clothes washer while anyone is showering.**

- **Install anti-scald or tempering devices.** These heat sensitive instruments stop or interrupt the flow of water when the temperature reaches a pre-determined level and prevent hot water that is too hot from coming out of the tap.
Most cooking-related scalds preventable. Some things you can do to make your home safer from cooking-related burns include:

- Establish a “safe area” out of the traffic path between the stove and sink where children can safely play and still be supervised. Keep young children in high chairs or play yards, a safe distance from counter- or stovetops, hot liquids, hot surfaces or other cooking hazards.

- **Cook on back burners** when young children are present. Keep all pot handles turned back, away from the stove edge. All appliance cords should be coiled and away from the counter edge. Curious children may reach up and grab handles or cords, pulling hot food and liquid down onto themselves.

- The grease in deep fat fryers and cookers can reach temperatures higher than 400 degrees Fahrenheit and cause serious burns in less than one second.

- During mealtime, place hot items in the **center of the table**, at least 10 inches from the table edge.

- **Use non-slip placemats instead of tablecloths** if toddlers are present. Young children may use the tablecloth to pull themselves up, causing hot liquids or food to spill down onto them.

- **Never drink or carry hot liquids while carrying or holding a child.** Quick motions may cause spilling of the liquid onto the child.
Microwave ovens, although perceived by many as safer than conventional ovens and stoves, heat foods and liquids to very high temperatures that can result in burns from spills, splashes and release of steam.

Microwave safety tips include:

- **Never heat bottles of baby formula or milk**, especially if using plastic bottle liners. In the microwave, plastic liners may burst, increasing the scald risk to infants.
- **Place microwave ovens at a safe height**, within easy reach for all users, to avoid spills. Microwaves should be placed so that the faces of children and people who use wheelchairs are higher than the front of the door.
- Steam, reaching over 200 degrees Fahrenheit, builds rapidly in covered containers and can easily result in burns to the face, arms and hands. **Puncture plastic wrap or use vented containers to allow steam to escape while cooking.** Or, wait at least one minute before removing the covering. When removing covers, lift the corner farthest from you and away from your face or arm.