



## Burn Safety for Infants and Children



**NewYork-Presbyterian**  
**Weill Cornell Medical Center**



Each year, thousands of babies and children get burned from dangers at home and play. Burns can happen from hot liquids fire hot objects chemicals, electricity, and radiation (such as the sun). Follow these safety tips to prevent a burn injury:

### Scald Burn Safety

Scalds from hot liquids or steam are the most common burns among children. Many of these are caused by hot food/drinks and bathing. Here are some ways to prevent scalds:

- Never bathe a child in the sink or under running water that can get too hot too quickly!
- Before placing a child into the tub, check the water temperature with a thermometer to make sure it is less than 100°F.
- Always supervise a child in the bath.
- Bathe children with their backs to the faucet to prevent them from touching the faucet and handles.
- Keep hot foods/drinks/liquids out of the reach of babies and children.
- Place only cold drinks in the cup holders of strollers or grocery carts.
- Make a 3-foot “adults only” safety zone around the stove, oven, BBQ, and microwave

### Kids and Burns:

- Most burns to children happen at home.
- Scalds are the most common cause of burns among children under 5 years old.
- Fire is the the most common cause of burns among children ages 5-16 years old.
- Children have thinner skin than adults and are more likely to get burned.
- Most burns are preventable.





- Never disconnect or remove working batteries from smoke alarms or CO detectors.
- Make and practice a fire escape plan for you and your family.
- Know 2 ways out of your home in case of fire or other emergency.
- Have a family meeting place outside of your home.
- Call 911 immediately if there is a fire or other emergency.

## Contact Burn Safety

Contact burns happen by touching hot objects such as household appliances and heaters, and are the second most common burns among young children. To prevent these burns, use these simple steps:

- When using an appliance (such as an iron, toaster, or curling iron), keep it and the cord out of reach, even when it's cooling down or not in use.
- Cover all radiators and heating pipes.
- Place beds and cribs away from radiators, heating pipes, and space heaters.
- Never place a baby onto an adult bed from which they can roll off and fall onto the floor or radiator.
- Always wear shoes when playing outside, in parks, at the beach, or in playgrounds.

## Chemical Safety

Chemicals (such as household cleaners) can cause serious burns to the skin, eyes, and lungs. They can also cause poisoning if swallowed. Follow these steps to keep your family safe:

- Keep chemicals away from and out of the reach of children.
- Use chemicals in areas with good ventilation and away from matches, lighters, stoves, pilot lights, and candles.
- Post the phone number to the local poison control center on the phone or refrigerator: 1-800-222-1222.

## Electrical Safety

Electricity is all around us all of the time and helps us in almost everything we do. When used improperly, it can lead to serious burn injuries. Here are ways to use electricity safely:

- Use a power strip to plug multiple devices into a single outlet.
- Before using, check electronics or appliances and do not use if the cord is broken, frayed, or has exposed wires.
- Place plug covers into unused electrical outlets.
- Teach your child not to touch or bite an electrical cord or outlet.
- Avoid using electricity in or near water.



- Never cook, serve, eat, or drink hot food/liquids while holding a child.
- Avoid using tablecloths and placemats that can easily be pulled by young children.
- Turn pot and pan handles inward on the stove and cook on the back burners when possible.
- Heat baby food/bottles by placing them into a cup of warm water instead of using the microwave.

## Fire Safety

Fires can cause serious harm to you, your family, and your property within seconds. Follow these fire safety tips to stay safe:

- Always store matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Keep children away from stoves, ovens, candles, and barbecues at all times.
- Clear a 3-foot area of all furniture, blankets, and other objects if using a space heater.
- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors near the kitchen, on each level of your home, and outside of all sleeping areas.
- Check smoke alarm and CO detector batteries monthly and change them at least two times per year, or if the devices are “chirping.”

## Sun Safety

Spending time outside can be fun, but too much sun can cause a serious sunburn. Stay sun-smart by following these tips for all seasons:

- Check with your doctor before putting sunscreen on babies less than 6 months of age or children with sensitive skin.
- Choose a sunscreen that protects from ultraviolet A (UVA) and B (UVB) sunlight, is water resistant, and rated with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or higher.
- Always apply sunscreen to the skin at least 30 minutes before going outdoors. Reapply every 1-2 hours and after swimming, sweating, or exercising—even on cloudy days.
- When outdoors, wear sunglasses (with UV protection), a hat, and a long sleeve t-shirt and pants when possible.
- Stay out of the sun between 10am – 4pm when the sun is the strongest



**The William Randolph Hearst Burn Center** at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center is one of the largest and busiest burn centers in the nation. We treat nearly 5,000 patients—one-third of whom are kids—each year.

By providing all phases of treatment—from the emergency response to rehabilitation—to patients and families who have suffered a burn injury, the Burn Center provides the expertise, resources, and continuity of care needed to get the best results.

To make an appointment to see a doctor or if you would like to learn more about burn prevention, please call the Hearst Burn Center at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center:

**Main Office/Appointments:** (212) 746 – 5410

**Burn Outreach/Education:** (212) 746 – 5417

**William Randolph Hearst Burn Center at  
NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital**  
525 East 68th Street, L706, New York, NY 10065

<http://nyp.org/services/burn-center.html>

If you or your family member gets burned, call 911 and seek immediate medical attention!

*This information is brief and general. It should not be the only source of your information on this health care topic. It is not to be used or relied upon for diagnosis or treatment. It does not take the place of instructions from your doctor. Talk to your health care providers before making a health care decision.*

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