

Media Release:

Prevent hot water burns this winter

Fancy a Cuppa?

It's an everyday scene. Mum's having a cuppa while holding her baby. Dad places his coffee at the edge of a table while the baby plays at his feet. The cup tips and spills, and the baby is hospitalised with severe burns.



Tragic? Yes. Rare? It happens more often than you might think.

According to Safekids New Zealand, almost six children a week are burned severely enough to be hospitalised due to contact with heat and hot liquids.

Children under five are the most at risk. Of 1 to 2 years old kids admitted for burns, Safekids says over half are severely scalded by spilt hot drinks (tea and coffee) and other liquids (soups, excessive hot tap water in baths).

"Hot water burns like fire, and young children who are severely burned often require many operations and years of treatment. Most child burn sufferers would have to deal with the pain and the consequences of disfigurement for the rest of their lives," said Safekids New Zealand Director Ann Weaver.

This winter, Safekids reminds families to take extra care when consuming hot drinks and food or using hot water in the home.

Hot Tips to prevent hot water burns:

- ✓ Never hold a child and a hot drink at the same time, and keep hot drinks, soups or jugs out of reach (near the middle of the table, not at the edge).
- ✓ 15 minutes after being made, a cuppa may still burn. Compared to an adult, children's skin burns quicker and deeper, and at lower temperature.
- ✓ Run the cold water first when running a bath.
- ✓ A hot water cylinder should be at least 60°C to prevent Legionella bacteria growth, but water coming out of the tap should be no hotter than 55°C. Exposure to water at 54°C takes 10 seconds to cause full thickness burn, whereas at 60°C it only takes 1 to 3 seconds. *If the water at the tap feels too hot, ask your local energy supplier or a licensed plumber for advise on how to adjust it, if necessary.*
- ✓ **First Aid:** Cool the burn under cold running water for at least 20 minutes.

For more information on childhood burn injury prevention, visit www.safekids.org.nz. For media inquiries, contact (09) 6310717. 021 555 249 or email anthonyr@adhb.govt.nz.

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About Safekids New Zealand

Safekids New Zealand is the injury prevention service of Starship Children's Health and a member of Safe Kids Worldwide. Our mission is to reduce the incidence and severity of unintentional injuries to New Zealand's children aged 0 - 14 years. Our Vision: New Zealand children will be free to enjoy their childhood without being adversely affected by unintentional injury. For more information, visit www.safekids.org.nz.

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