

Autumn & Winter safety media release

TODDLERS AT RISK OF 'HOT CUPPA' BURN INJURIES



It's an everyday scene. Mum drinking a hot cuppa while carrying her baby. Dad placing his coffee at the edge of a table as his baby plays on his feet. The 'cuppa' spills, and baby is hospitalised with deep burn injuries.

Tragic? Yes. Rare? No. It happens more often than you might think.

Safekids New Zealand advises all parents to be extra careful when consuming or handling hot liquids around children, especially during the coming cold months. According to Safekids, of children aged 1 to 2 years old hospitalised due to severe burn injuries, over half are burned by spilt hot drinks (tea and coffee) and other liquids (such as soups and noodles).



Safekids also says that while fatalities are few, hot substance burns (liquids, surfaces, objects) caused at least three times the number of children admitted to hospitals compared to burns from fire and flame. It is estimated that almost 6 children are burnt severely enough to be hospitalised each week.

Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids, said the dangers posed by hot liquids being spilt on children are often underestimated. "A child's skin is thinner than an adult's, so hot liquids burn quicker, deeper and at lower temperatures. In normal conditions, a hot cuppa that was made 15 minutes previously, can still burn a young child," Ann said.

"Hot water burns like fire, and a single hot drink spilled over a baby is equivalent to a bucket of boiling water tipped over an adult," Ann said.

Safekids added that severely burned babies often require multiple operations and treatments. "Burnt children and their traumatised families will have to deal with the consequences of these injuries for the rest of their lives," she added.

'Hot' Tips

Below are tips from Safekids and Burn Support Charitable Trust, Inc. which identifies a number of ways to avoid 'hot cuppa' horrors:

- **First Aid:** Apply running water from the cold tap gently over the burn for at least 20 minutes. If in any doubt regarding the burn, seek medical advice immediately.
- Always keep hot drinks out of reach, near the centre of a table, NOT at the edge.
- Never hold a child and a hot drink at the same time, and be aware of children when holding a hot drink.
- Actively supervise children.

-ENDS-

Editor's Notes:

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.