

# PREVENTING CHILDHOOD BURN INJURY

[www.safekids.org.nz](http://www.safekids.org.nz)



## TEACHER BACKGROUND

*Safekids New Zealand*, the injury prevention service of *Starship Children's Health*, has determined that burns from hot liquids (*i.e. hot tea, coffee, and soups*) result in over half the reported cases of severe burn hospital admissions among babies in New Zealand. The study also reported that burns from hot substances (*liquids, surfaces, objects*) caused three times the numbers of hospitalizations of children 0-14 years, compared to burns from fire and flame. Below we provide safety management activities for **years 4-8+** and **years 1-3**.

## TUNING IN TO HOT WATER INDUCED BURN INJURY

- Tell students that hot water burns like fire. Did they know that a hot drink can still burn a child up to 15 minutes of being made?
- Have any class member or members of their families suffered a burn injury from hot water? Can they remember how it happened and how it felt?
- Divide into groups and have students brainstorm a list of possible situations where a hot water burn injury could occur – especially to very young children. Can they think of any ways or actions that could have been taken to avoid the burn injury? Present ideas.

## RESEARCHING CAUSES AND TREATMENT

- Share the following fact with students. 'Hot drinks are the number one cause of burn injuries and hospitalisation for children under 5'. Are students surprised about this fact? Speculate on why this is so.
- Visit [www.teachingonline.org/hotdrinks.pdf](http://www.teachingonline.org/hotdrinks.pdf) Print out.
- Using the pdf, the student task is to research and identify:
  - how a spilled hot drink can affect young children and why
  - situations where hot drinks can be spilled over young children
  - measures we can take to help prevent this from happening
  - why we must supervise young children and teach them about hot drinks
  - immediate measures to take to prevent long-term scarring and reduce the burn injury severity

- what other measures should we take, things we should not do and why we shouldn't do them.

- Spend time discussing the research findings. Are there any family rules in place at their home that are designed to reduce the chances of burn injury from hot water? Share rules.



IMMEDIATE TREATMENT

## GETTING THESE MESSAGES OUT

- Set the following task for each student. Their challenge is to get these important messages out to all the members of their families and other students at school. How will they do this? Brainstorm ideas. Have them consider:
  - talking to family members to find out what rules they have at present around hot water and discussing how these rules could be improved further
  - identifying hazards on a room by room basis, eg turning pot handles inwards, keeping jug chords out of reach, and designing a fridge reminder brochure for the family
  - preparing oral reports for assembly to keep the message fresh
  - a display of hot water burn injury safety posters for every room of the school, local supermarkets, library, whare kai
  - acting out mini-dramas depicting safe behaviour around hot water to junior classes at school
  - run a 'being safe around hot water' slogan competition.

## ACTIVITIES FOR YEARS 1-3

- Discuss the good things about hot water ... baths, showers, warming drinks in winter.
- Do the students remember any rules they have at home about being careful with hot water? Why do they think they have these rules?
- Have the class ask their parents about rules they have at home about hot water. Share these with the class.

- Have all students contribute pictures, words and captions to a **Being Safe Around Hot Water** wall chart.
- Explain that hot drinks can be easily spilled and can cause very nasty burns. Tell students this is why we always sit down when we have a hot drink.
- Do they have any very young children at home? Tell students that we must always keep under 5's away from hot water. Can they think of any ways that they can help? Add to chart.

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