

Hot Water Burns¹

University Extension²

TREATMENT FOR BURNS

Minor Burns

1. Hold burned area under cool running water for 15 minutes.
2. Do NOT apply ointments or butter.
3. Cover the area with dry gauze.
4. Do NOT pop blisters.

Consult a doctor if burns occur on the face, hands, genitalia, feet, or for any burn on an infant.

Severe Burns

1. Have one person call 911 or the local emergency number while another person runs cool water over the burned area. Do NOT use ice.
2. Do NOT put ointment or grease on the burn and do NOT try to remove pieces of cloth from the burned area.
3. DO NOT break blisters.
4. DO NOT give the victim anything to eat or drink.
5. DO raise the burned limbs to minimize swelling.
6. DO keep the victim from being chilled or overheated.

Prevention

- Turn down the water heater to 120 degrees.
- Test bath water before putting a child in it. If the water feels hot to you, it will burn a child.
- Put the child in the bath with their back to the faucet so they can't turn the water on.
- Get knob covers for the bathroom tub.

CAUSES OF HOT WATER BURNS:

- About 50 percent occur because parents put children in water that is too hot.
- Children turn the water faucet on or fall into a tub of hot water.
- Deliberate abuse by parents.

Nearly 2 million people are treated for burns annually in the United States.

About 100,000 will be hospitalized, and nearly 12,000 will die.

About 112,000 of these burns are scald burns. According to Safe Kids Coalition, about 37,000 of these people are 14 or under, and about 18,000 are 5 or under.

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2. University Extension, University of Missouri-Columbia, Agricultural Engineering Department.

The United States has the highest rate of burns in the industrialized world, according to the National Safety Council.

Burns are the second leading cause of death for young children ages 0 to 5.

Children burn faster than adults because they have thinner skin.

Everyday, 300 young children are taken to emergency rooms for burns caused by household water that was too hot. Annually, 3,000 of these children require hospitalization.

Water heaters leave the factory set at 140 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit. It takes 2 seconds for a child to receive third degree burns from water at 150 degrees. It takes 5 seconds if the water is at 140 degrees, and 30 seconds at 130 degrees.

TO TEST YOUR WATER HEATER'S TEMPERATURE

- Check it in the early morning before anyone has used the hot water.
- Go into the kitchen and turn on the hot water tap and leave it running for two minutes.
- Hold an outdoor thermometer or candy thermometer in the stream of running water until the temperature stops rising.
- If the temperature is between 120 and 125, good.
- If higher, find the thermostat on the water heater and turn it down.
- Gas water heaters have an external thermostat, near the bottom.
- Electric water heaters have two panels screwed to the top and bottom of the tank or one panel on the side. Set it to "low" or "Energy Efficient."
- Wait 24 hours and then test the water temperature again to see it is in the safe range.
- Consult a professional if the temperature did not go down.