

Preventable injuries are the number one cause of death among children. These injuries kill nearly 1 million children worldwide every year. Education and creating safer environments for children have been proven to decrease child injury rates. Burns are one of the most common among these preventable injuries. Electrical burns, chemical burns, scalding and thermal burns are all examples of common ways that children can be injured.

Remember that accidental burns to children are preventable. Be sure to childproof electrical outlets and appliances and make sure young children can't reach appliance cords. Use outlet covers to keep small children from inserting objects into them. When finished, unplug appliances that heat up quickly such as hair dryers and irons. Finally, don't hold a child while cooking on the stove. Many accidental burns happen this way as the child reaches for hot objects on the stovetop.

Something that many adults may not think about is checking to make sure the temperature on the water heater isn't too high. To prevent accidental scalding, set your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or the manufacturer's recommended setting. Anti-scald devices for water faucets and showerheads are also available. Parents of small children should check the water temperature with his/her wrist before giving the child a bath.

Kids are naturally curious, especially when it comes to food cooking on the stove. If an adult is cooking on the front burner of the stove, it is much easier for a child to reach the hot pan. Using the back burner of the stove and turning pot handles away from the edge help prevent hot food and liquid spills. Oven mitts and potholder are also useful to keep hot foods away from counter edges. Never use a wet oven mitt or towel to touch hot objects. The moisture combined with the heat can cause scalding.

Take the time to engage older kids in cooking. When it comes time for teenagers to start cooking some of their own meals, it's important that they know how to do it safely. Teenagers may easily become distracted while cooking. Parents should teach teens never to leave the kitchen while they are using the stove or oven. In addition, children should not be allowed to use the microwave until they are tall enough to reach it safely and they are able to understand that the food cooked in the microwave is hot enough to burn them.

There are many different ways to help prevent burns. Other ideas include:

- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Keep flammable materials away from space heaters.
- Install barriers such as safety gates around fireplaces, ovens and furnaces.
- Keep lit candles away from anything that can burn (at least twelve inches), and always blow them out when you leave the room or before you go to sleep.
- Keep matches out of children's reach and teach them to never play with matches or lighters.
- Harsh chemicals, such as cleaning agents, should be kept where children cannot get into them.
- Sun burn is another type of burn that is often overlooked. However, being outdoors without skin protection can sometimes lead to second degree burns! Apply sunblock regularly when children are going to be outdoors.