



## Safety in the home - Burns and scalds

**Babies and young children are especially at risk from burns — they're naturally curious and have sensitive skin that needs extra protection. Most burns or scalds are caused in the day-to-day situations that many parents don't anticipate, like children reaching a hot drink or grabbing hair straighteners.**

It takes just 5 seconds for a toddler to suffer a severe scald from too hot bath water, for example. For this reason, it's really important to be aware of the dangers around your home so you can protect your child from harm. Hot drinks are one of the most common causes of burns and scalds. Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) has highlighted some dangers in and around the home to be aware of.

### In the kitchen

- Hot drinks are one of the most common causes of burns and scalds. A cup of tea can burn even 15 minutes after its been made, so put your baby down before picking up your hot drink and avoid passing a hot drink over their heads.
- Remember to always keep hot drinks well out of reach of your baby or toddler and never hold a hot drink at the same time as your baby. Ensure hot drinks are kept away from the edge of tables and worktops.
- Put your kitchen kettle in a safe position, well out of your little one's reach. Make sure it can't be pulled off a worktop. Ensure that the kettle cord or the cord to the kettle base does not hang over the edge of the worktop. A kettle with a short or curly flex is ideal.
- Discourage your child from playing where you are cooking. Always keep pan handles turned away from the edge of the cooker and ensure children are not close by when you're holding pans of hot water or the kettle.

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**For additional Parent Tips see [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)**

The information in this resource was updated on 01/06/2022 as part of suite of Parent Tips on safety in the home with support from the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) who we thank for the use of their resources.

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- Avoid using a microwave to warm a baby's bottle of milk because microwaves may not heat up the milk evenly, which can scald a baby's mouth.
- Hobs and ovens stay hot even after they have been turned off, so it is best to keep children away from them.

## In the bathroom

- When running your baby's bath always run the cold water first and then top up with hot water. Check the temperature of your child's bath before letting them get into the water. Your baby's bath should be 37°C to 38°C, which is around body temperature. If you're not using a thermometer, a quick way to check is to use your wrist or elbow rather than your hand to gauge the temperature. The water should feel neither hot nor cool.
- You could consider fitting a Thermostatic Mixing valve (TMV), especially to the bath hot tap, as this controls the temperature of hot water and reducing the risk of burns.
- Please never leave your child alone in the bath. See [iHV Parent Tips - Water Safety](https://bit.ly/3NE0PLO) for more information: <https://bit.ly/3NE0PLO>

## Around the home

- Keep your iron and heated hair appliances well out of your child's reach, even when they are cooling down. Put your hot hair straightener into an insulated bag when you have finished using it.
- Always use a guard around your fire or heater, and make sure your children don't play close by.
- If you have any worries or questions about safety around the home or when on holiday, your health visitor can offer advice which follows current safety guidelines.

## Magnetic toys

- Toys that have a high strength magnet in them can also burn through your child's tummy if they swallow them. CAPT advises buying such toys from a "reputable retailer or a brand name you know online or in-store, and avoid online marketplaces".

## Outside the home

- Barbecues (BBQs) stay hot for a long time. If you are using a disposable BBQ, keep out of reach of your child while using it and tip it into a bucket of cold water to help it cool quicker.
- Fire pits and bonfires are often fascinating for children. All children need to be supervised and kept a safe distance from them.

## Button batteries

- These are used a lot in the home in a number of ways such as:
  - Remote controls
  - Thermometers
  - Games and toys
  - Hearing aids
  - Calculators
  - Bathroom scales
  - Key fobs
  - Watches and electronic jewellery
  - Flashing shoes & clothing
  - Cameras
  - Holiday ornaments
  - Flameless candles
  - Musical greeting cards
- If a child swallows a button battery and it gets stuck in their food pipe, it can burn a hole and cause internal bleeding and even death.
- Button batteries should be kept out of reach (including supposedly 'dead' batteries which are still dangerous), and only used in products with screw down battery compartments. Particular vigilance is needed for products ordered online and/or obtained secondhand.

## What to do in an emergency with a burn or scald

- Appropriate first aid must be used to treat any burns or scalds as soon as possible. This will limit the amount of damage to your skin. See the NHS website for information on first aid for burns:  
<https://bit.ly/3yggonH>
- "Cool, call, cover"
  - **COOL** for 20 minutes under cool running water
  - **CALL** 999 OR 111 or your GP for advice
  - **COVER** the burn loosely with cling film.

For more information on burns and scalds, visit:

<https://bit.ly/3LT20Wz>

## More information:

- **Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT)** - For more information on child safety, visit: <https://bit.ly/3xk00SK>  
CAPT also has some really helpful resources regarding button batteries:
  - » Button batteries - Top tips: <https://bit.ly/3LHxjDH>
  - » What to do in an emergency if you think your child has swallowed a button battery: <https://bit.ly/3LOGn9U>
  - » Buy safe toys leaflet: <https://bit.ly/3MQA5Xo>
  - » Keeping your child safe from magnets: <https://bit.ly/3w4XrSk>
- **NHS** - Baby and toddler safety: <https://bit.ly/3KFINX2>

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