

# Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Charity's Guide to Protecting Your Child from Burns and Scalds in the Home

## In the kitchen

**Young children can climb on chairs and counters and may often reach higher than you think.**

Saucepans can seem like fun to play with. Turn the saucepan handles away from the edge of the counter or cooker and use the back rings to keep them out of reach of little hands.

Kettle cords are also a temptation, push the kettle to the back of the worktop, or use a kettle with a short or curly flex to keep them out of reach.

Hot drinks can easily be knocked over or grabbed by little fingers so put your baby or child down before picking up your hot drink, avoid passing them over children's heads and keep them well out of reach of children.

**A cup of tea can burn even 15 minutes after it's been made.**

Hobs and hotplates can all stay hot even after they've been turned off, and oven doors can be very hot when the oven is on. You can teach children how to behave safely around them, but they might not understand or remember the danger so it's best to keep them away.

Microwaves don't heat things in the same way as a cooker. Warming babies' bottles in the microwave means the milk may heat up unevenly leaving spots of very hot milk which can scald your baby's mouth. It is best to use a warmer or jug of hot water instead. Shake the bottle well after warming and test to make sure it's lukewarm, not hot.

Chip pans can easily cause fires! If you don't want to switch to oven chips or use an electric deep-fat fryer, make sure you only fill your pan 1/3 full and keep an eye on it.

Matches, cigarette lighters and candles are grown-up objects. Toddlers and young children can find them fascinating. It's safest to keep matches, lighters and candles out of their reach and sight. If you can lock them away, even better.

## In the bedroom

Hair straighteners and curling tongs get as hot as an iron and can still burn even after they're unplugged. Store safely on a high shelf, or put them inside a heatproof bag to stop your little ones from playing with them, touching or stepping on them by accident.

## In the bathroom

**A baby's skin is 15 times thinner than an adult's, so hot water can pose a real danger to children.**

Cold before hot - you can make sure the water is the right temperature by putting the cold water in the bath first.

When the cold water has run, add the hot to get the right temperature.



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The elbow test is the quickest way to check the temperature of the bath water! Dipping your elbow into the water gives a good idea of how it will feel for your baby or toddler. It shouldn't feel hot or cold.

Thermostatic mixing valves (TMVs) are a great invention. They control the temperature of the hot tap so that you can have a nice hot bath but they stop children being scalded within seconds. Some newer houses and flats already have TMVs fitted to the bath, but you can get them installed by a professional.

Bath time - many scalds happen when a child gets into the bath before it is ready, play with the hot tap when they're in the bath or lean over to pick out a toy and fall in. Bath water can cause such bad burns that children need years of treatment and may be scarred for life. Staying with your child all of the time during bath time will help you to keep them safe.

## In the living room

Hot drinks are something to watch out for in the living room too. Choose a high shelf to put your mug on, rather than a low coffee table. If you need a relaxing cup of tea, ask someone else to hold the baby while you put your feet up, or put the baby in its own chair.

Heaters and fires - dancing flames can be appealing to babies and toddlers. A fire guard can stop them getting to the fire and reaching for or falling into the flames.

Irons will stay hot after they're unplugged. Even older children could make a mistake and touch a hot iron. It is always safest to put it away – out of reach and out of sight – after you have used it.

## Outside

Barbecues stay hot for a long time, even when all the food has gone. Disposable barbecues can be tipped into a bucket of cold water to help them cool quicker, while children are kept out of the way!

Bonfires are fascinating for children. Even though they usually only happen once a year it's best to teach children to stay a safe distance from the fire and supervise them carefully.

### Sparklers can reach a temperature of 2000°C.

Have a bucket of water handy to put them in so that no-one can pick a hot one off the ground.

Babies or children can wriggle in your arms and reach out unexpectedly. Avoid holding a baby or child when you have a sparkler in your hand.

Children under five are too young to safely hold a sparkler and don't really understand why they might be dangerous. Avoid giving them one to hold.

Children over five will still require adult supervision when using a sparkler. It's safest if they wear gloves when they're holding them. Teach them not to wave sparklers near anyone else or run with them.

The burns unit at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital is the largest specialist burns unit in the UK, treating over 450 children and young people with burns and scalds each year. To find out more about how you can support this fantastic service visit [www.rmchcharity.org.uk](http://www.rmchcharity.org.uk) or call **0161 276 4522**.

This guide has been produced by Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Charity with support from the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT).

The Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) is the UK's leading charity working to reduce the number of children and young people killed, disabled or seriously injured in accidents. For further advice on how to protect your child from accidents please visit [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk).



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