

# First Aid: Burns

Scald burns from hot water and other liquids are the most common burns in early childhood. Because burns range from mild to life threatening, some can be treated at home, while others need emergency medical care.

## What to Do

If your child is severely burned, **call 911 right away**. While you wait for help, begin these treatments:

- Remove clothing from the burned areas, except clothing stuck to the skin.
- Run cool (**not cold**) water over the burn until the pain eases.
- Lightly apply a gauze bandage.
- If your child is awake and alert, offer ibuprofen or acetaminophen for pain.
- **Do not put any ointments, butter, or other remedies on the burn** — these can make the burn worse.
- **Do not break any blisters** that have formed.

## Seek Emergency Medical Care

If:

- The burned area is large (cover the area with a clean, soft cloth or towel).
- The burns came from a fire, an electrical wire or socket, or chemicals.
- The burn is on the face, hands, feet, joints, or genitals.
- The burn looks infected (with swelling, pus, or increasing redness or red streaking of the skin near the wound).

## Think Prevention!

- Be careful when using candles, space heaters, and curling irons.
- Keep children away from radiators.
- Be alert around hot drinks.
- Check the temperature of bath water before putting a child in the tub.
- Check smoke alarm batteries at least once a month.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.
- Do not allow young children to play in the kitchen while someone is cooking.

Reviewed by: Steven Dowshen, MD

Date reviewed: April 2014

---



Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

© 1995-2015 The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved.

Images provided by The Nemours Foundation, iStock, Getty Images, Corbis, Veer, Science Photo Library, Science Source Images, Shutterstock, and Clipart