

Hot Food and Beverages Can Burn!

Caregiver Alert

April 2016



Did you Know?

- 1/3 of people admitted to burn centers are for scald injuries
- 84% of scald burns happen in homes
- 85-90% of scald burns are related to cooking/drinking/serving hot liquids

Frequent Sources of Scald Injuries

- Hot Beverage Spills
- Cooking
- Hot Tap Water
- Steam

Who is at Increased Risk?

- Children
- Older adults
- People with disabilities

What is a Scald?

Scalds occur when a portion of skin is exposed to a hot liquid or steam and typically damage several layers of skin. Scalds typically don't reach connective or nerve tissue, muscle, fat, or bone. However, scalds can be just as harmful as a third degree burn and may even lead to death.

The severity of a scald injury depends on the temperature to which the skin is exposed and how long it is exposed. When the temperature of a hot liquid is increased to 140° F it takes only five seconds or less for a serious burn to occur. Coffee, tea, hot chocolate and other hot beverages are usually served at 160° to 180° F, resulting in almost instantaneous burns that may require surgery.



Why?

- Limited mobility, agility, vision, and general awareness
- Burns to the lap are common when a person attempts to carry hot liquids or food while seated in a wheelchair
- Moving hot liquids can be extremely difficult for someone who uses a cane or walker

What Can Happen?

- Considerable pain
- Prolonged treatment
- Possible lifelong scarring
- Death

What Can You do to Prevent Scalds?

Eating Areas

- Keep hot foods and beverages away from table edges (at least 10 inches)
- Do not leave hot beverages unattended

Serving Food and Beverages

- Use travel mugs with spill-resistant lids for all hot drinks
- Discourage individuals from carrying cups of hot beverages without a lid while walking or in a wheelchair
- Don't overfill cups or bowls
- Warn others that a hot liquid is being served
- Place beverages in field of vision and near dominant hand
- Transfer hot beverages into serving containers which allow the temperature to drop

Kitchen Safety

- Avoid cluttered countertops
- Keep hot food and beverages away from counter edges
- Keep cooking appliances away from counter edges
- Keep appliance cords short or coiled
- Avoid using extension cords
- Cook on rear burners
- Turn pan handles away from stove front
- Use non-slip floor mats near food preparation areas
- Wipe up spills immediately
- Be sure path is clear when carrying or serving food
- Use oven mitts when cooking or handling hot food and drinks

Microwave safety

- Microwave ovens should be placed on countertop, not mounted above stove
- Use only microwave-safe cookware
- Reheating liquids in the microwave not only heats the liquid it can also heat the dish to an unsafe temperature
- Allow food to cool before opening door
- Use an oven mitt to remove hot dishes from the microwave
- Always open lids or coverings away from your face to allow hot steam to escape
- Stir and test foods before serving

How to Treat a Scald

- Immediately remove non-stick clothing and apply cool water.
- Wrap the burn loosely in clean cloth. Don't use oils, butter, etc.
- If the burned area is red, blistered or peeling, seek medical attention!



Time and temperature for water to cause a serious burn in a healthy adult

155° F	68° C	1 second
140° F	60° C	5 seconds
127° F	52° C	1 minute
120° F	48° C	5 minutes
100° F	38° C	Safe Bathing Temp.

More information:

American Burn Association:

<http://www.ameriburn.org/preventionEdRes.php>

National Scald Prevention Campaign:

<http://flashsplash.org/>