

First Aid for Scald Burns Caused by Hot Liquids or Steam



Immediately cool the scalded skin under cool running water or soak in cool water



Remove any hot, wet clothing unless it is stuck to the skin



Continue cooling the scalded skin for 10-15 minutes

Cooling the scalded skin will help to:

- lower the temperature of the skin and stop the burning process
- numb the pain
- reduce or stop swelling

Go to the doctor or hospital if the scald burn:

- is more than half the size of the person's hand
- is on the face, hands, feet or groin area
- breaks or blisters the skin

If you do not need to see a doctor, cover the scalded area with a clean, non-stick bandage or gauze.

Never use these on scald burns:



Hot liquids – not fire – are the most common causes of burns to young children.

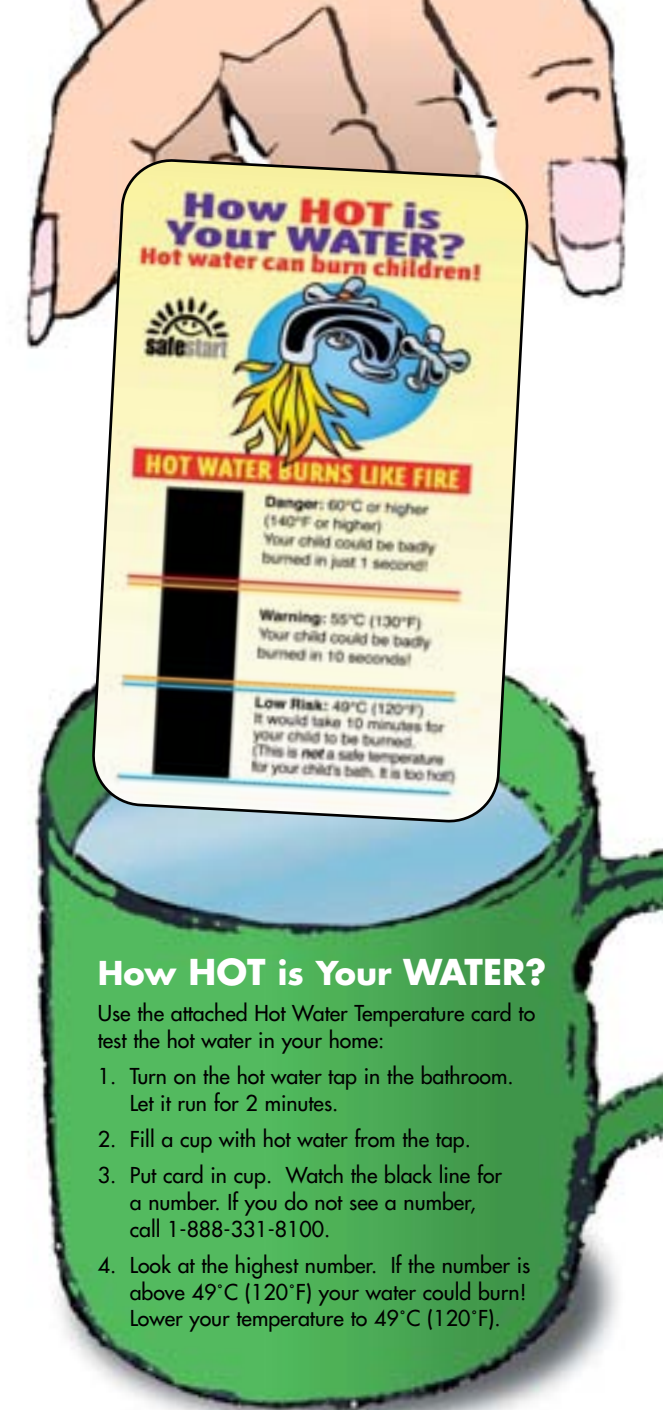
Every year in British Columbia thousands of children are treated in emergency departments for burns from hot tap water and other liquids.

Hot water that comes from your taps can cause serious and painful scald burns very quickly. 90% of hot tap water burns happen at home, and 65% of these happen in the bathroom. Chances are, the hot water temperature in your home is set too high.

Reducing the temperature of your hot water can mean the difference between a minor injury or scarring for life.



This baby's feet were badly burned by hot tap water. Scald burns happen so easily and too often. It only takes a turn of the hot water tap, a tipped cup of coffee or a pulled kettle cord to seriously scald a child's skin.



How HOT is Your WATER?

Use the attached Hot Water Temperature card to test the hot water in your home:

1. Turn on the hot water tap in the bathroom. Let it run for 2 minutes.
2. Fill a cup with hot water from the tap.
3. Put card in cup. Watch the black line for a number. If you do not see a number, call 1-888-331-8100.
4. Look at the highest number. If the number is above 49°C (120°F) your water could burn! Lower your temperature to 49°C (120°F).

Warning: Never use this card to test your child's bath water.

What Is A Safe Temperature?

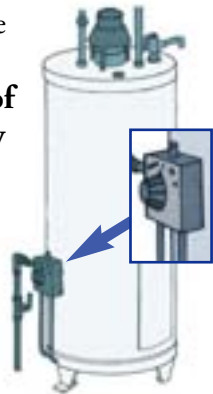
If the reading on the card is **49°C (120°F)**, your hot water is safe for household use (using the dishwasher or clothes washer). However, it is still too hot for a bath. Add cold water.

If the reading is 55°C (130°F), or 60°C+ (140°F+), the water is too hot. **A child's skin is thinner and burns quicker than an adult's.** Your child could get a second-degree burn, which is very painful. Your child's skin will blister and it may leave a scar.

What Can I Do To Prevent Scald Burns?

Lower the temperature of your hot water. Lowering the temperature can be done in various ways. The choice depends on your hot water heater and your budget.

Gas and oil-fired water heaters have temperature dials located on the outside of the tank. A safer temperature for your hot water heater is 49°C (120°F). Before adjusting the dial, read the manual for your hot water heater or call the company that made the water heater. **Do not lower the temperature of your water heater below 49°C (120°F).** Wait 24 hours after adjusting your dial. Then test again with your Hot Water Temperature card.



Electric water heaters should not be turned down. If the temperature setting is below 60°C (140° F), it can lead to the growth of bacteria that causes Legionnaires' disease. Talk to a plumber about installing mixing valves to lower the water temperature.

A licensed plumber can install mixing valves at various points in the water line. Mixing valves control the temperature by adding cool water if needed. This can be done for the hot water coming into individual taps, specific rooms that have water taps or throughout your home.



Use **tap guards** to block your child's access to the hot water tap. These can be found in some home improvement and children's product stores.

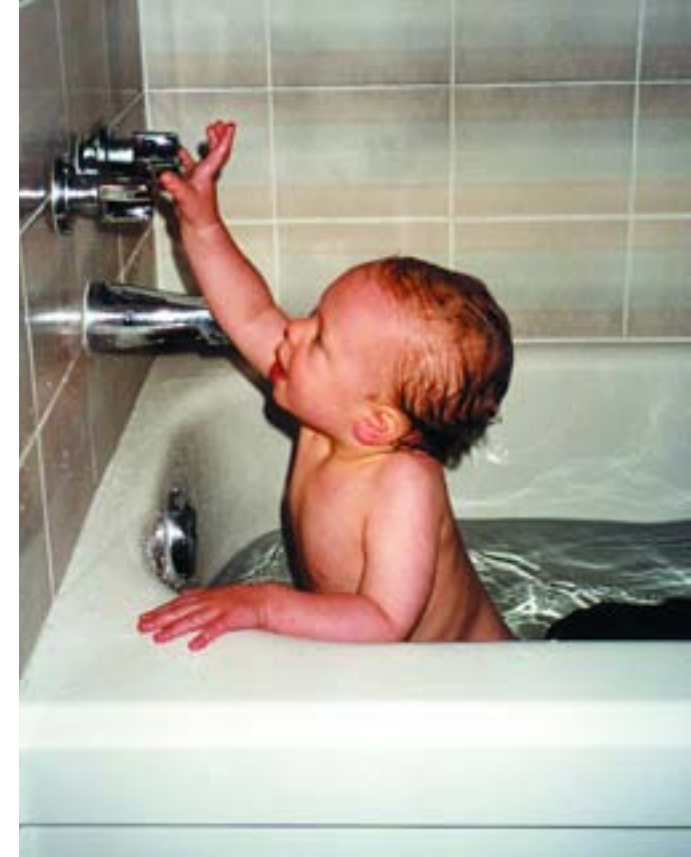
Use **anti-scald devices** on bathtub, sink spouts and showerheads. When the water gets too hot, the valve will slow or stop the flow of water.

What Can I Do If I Live In An Apartment?

Get together with other parents and talk to your building manager or landlord. Ask about installing mixing valves on your building's hot water heater or at each of the taps in your apartment. Put tap guards or anti-scald devices on your bathroom and kitchen spouts.

Bathroom Safety Tips

- When filling the bathtub, first turn on the cold water. Then mix in hot water until the water reaches a safe temperature (about 37° C/99° F). When the tub is a few inches full, turn off the hot water first then let the cold water run to cool the faucet.
- Keep your child out of the bathtub while the water is running.
- Never leave the bathroom while you are filling the tub.
- Mix the water with your hand to get rid of hot spots. Use your elbow to check the temperature before putting your child into the bathtub.
- Never leave a small child in the bathtub with an older child who may be able to turn on the hot water tap.
- Always stay with your child in the bathroom or bathtub. If you must leave to answer the door or phone, take your child with you.
- Keep the bathroom door closed when not in use. A hook or slide latch put on the upper outside of the bathroom door can keep unsupervised toddlers out of the bathroom.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:

**The Safety Station
Safe Start
604-875-2244
toll-free 1-888-331-8100.**

People who have a weakened immune system, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, HIV/AIDS, cancer, or an organ transplant should check with their doctor before reducing the temperature of their household water supply.