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HOW HOT IS THE WATER IN YOUR HOME?



Tap water scald burns

Each year, several thousand children and adults are burned by tap water because the water is too hot. These burns can be prevented.

- Always know where your children are and what they are doing. Continuous and adequate supervision of young children is critically important.
- Put a small slide-bolt latch on the upper half of the outside of the bathroom door. This will prevent young children from entering the bathroom without supervision, and will also help control other risks, such as drowning in the tub, chemical burns, etc.

In the bath

- Generally the water in a child's bath should not be hotter than 100 degrees F.
- Run cold water into the tub first, then add hot water to reach a safe temperature. This will prevent a scald burn if the child should fall into the tub while it is being filled.
- Before placing a child into the bathtub, check the temperature of the water by moving your hand through the water for a few seconds. If the water feels hot, it is too hot for the child.
- Toys in the bathtub may establish the tub and bathroom as a play area. Give the child a washcloth instead of a toy.
- Face the child away from the faucets and keep them closer to the other end of the tub (away from the faucets).



Make the environment safer

- Lower the thermostat setting of the water heater to 120-125 degrees F. A temperature of 125 degrees F. should provide plenty of hot water for normal household activities. The maximum temperature should not be higher than 125 degrees F.
- NOTE: At 130 degrees, a serious burn can occur in 30 seconds. At 140 degrees, only 5 seconds are required. The time may be reduced by 50 percent or more for children under age 5 and some adults over 65.
- Gas water heaters can be adjusted easily. Electric water heaters require disconnecting (shutting off) the electricity to the water heater and removing the cover plates to adjust the thermostat. Check with your utility company for directions to adjust an electric water heater.
- After the thermostat is turned down, check the temperature 24 hours later by running the hot water to make sure the temperature is low enough to be safe.
- Consider installing pressure balancing/ thermostatically controlled shower/tub valves which reduce the water temperature to 115 degrees F. or less. These valves can be attached to the bathtub fixtures, installed in the wall at the bathtub, or connected at the water heater. These temperature-controlling valves vary in cost and installation requirements, and can be purchased at some hardware stores or through plumbers. The resulting safety is worth the cost.

You can [request a free printed copy of this popular booklet.](#)

February 11, 2003

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If you know of a child Shriners Hospitals might be able to help, please call our toll-free patient referral line: In the U.S.: 1-800-237-5055. In Canada: 1-800-361-7256

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