



## Kids - The Risk of Burns

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On the surface, it's pretty much a no-brainer that children are at a higher risk than adults for a burn injury. As they grow, they have to learn the dangers of fires, hot surfaces, scalding liquids and other hazards; they don't have the experience that adults have.

And there are other, less obvious reasons children are more at risk of being burned.

Fire and burn injuries can hurt children more severely because they have thinner skin than adults. In other words, a burn accident can cause a more serious injury to a child from a source with a lower temperature.

Most injuries and deaths from burns happen in the home. It's incumbent upon parents, grandparents and other caretakers to take precautions to make the home more safe for children and protect them from fires and other heat sources.

For kids under five years of age, the most common injury types are flames and scalding.

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Flame sources include playing with matches, cigarette lighters, fires in fireplaces, barbecue pits, and trash fires.

Make sure that fire sources such as cigarette lighters or grill lighters are kept where children don't have access to them. An adult should always be present at any open fire, such as a trash fire or bonfire. Fire can escape and spread with astounding rapidity, and a quick emergency water source should always be in place to douse a fire that get out of control.

If you have a fireplace, whether burning wood or gas logs, an adult should be there to keep an eye on any child who may come near.

Scald sources include kitchen injuries that happen when a child tips over liquids that are cooking on a stove or perhaps in a crockpot, or coffee maker. Even a hot cup of coffee or soup left on a counter or table can be a danger.

One rule to remember is to turn all the handles of cooking pots back from the edge of the stove front and away from where a child can reach it. (That's a good idea anyway, to protect adults as well from bumping into a pot handle and causing a spill of scalding hot food.)

Children are also vulnerable to scalds from hot water in bathtubs. Bathtub scalds are often the result of a lack of supervision. The greatest number of these type of burns happen to infants and toddlers under 3 years old.

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At the ages from 5 to 10 years, little boys run greater risk because of playing with fire and taking risks. Little girls run more risk with kitchen and bathroom burns.

In the adolescent years, boys run risks with peer-group games, playing with gasoline or other flammable liquids, or explosive items like aerosol cans.

Another area of concern is fireworks. While the heavy-duty pyrotechnics such as firecrackers and Roman candles are prohibited in California, ground and hand-held sparkling devices are not. And according to the National Council on Fireworks Safety, 16 percent of all consumer fireworks injuries are caused by sparklers burning hands and legs.

These are some tips from the NCFS on preventing sparkler accidents:

- Children under age 12 should never use sparklers without very close adult supervision.
- Adults should never hold a child in their arms while using sparklers.
- Neither children nor adults use sparklers while barefoot. Always wear closed-toe shoes.
- The wire and stick of a sparkler stay hot long after the flame has gone out. Drop the spent sparklers directly in a bucket of water.
- Anyone using a sparkler should stand at least 6 feet from other people.

- Children should be warned never to throw sparklers, not to wave them, and not to run while holding a sparkler.
- Children should be shown how to hold sparklers away from their body and at arm's length.
- Finally, remember these fundamental fire-safety measures.
- Plan an escape route or multiple escape routes from your home. Explain the plan to your children and have them repeat it back to you. Better still, with smaller children, have them draw a diagram of it.
- Don't leave kids unattended around supplemental heating equipment such as space heaters, or around outside grills.
- Install smoke alarms if you don't have them already. These little gadgets are truly life-savers. Maintain them and make sure the batteries are fresh.

## Contact Our Burn Injury Attorneys in Sacramento

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